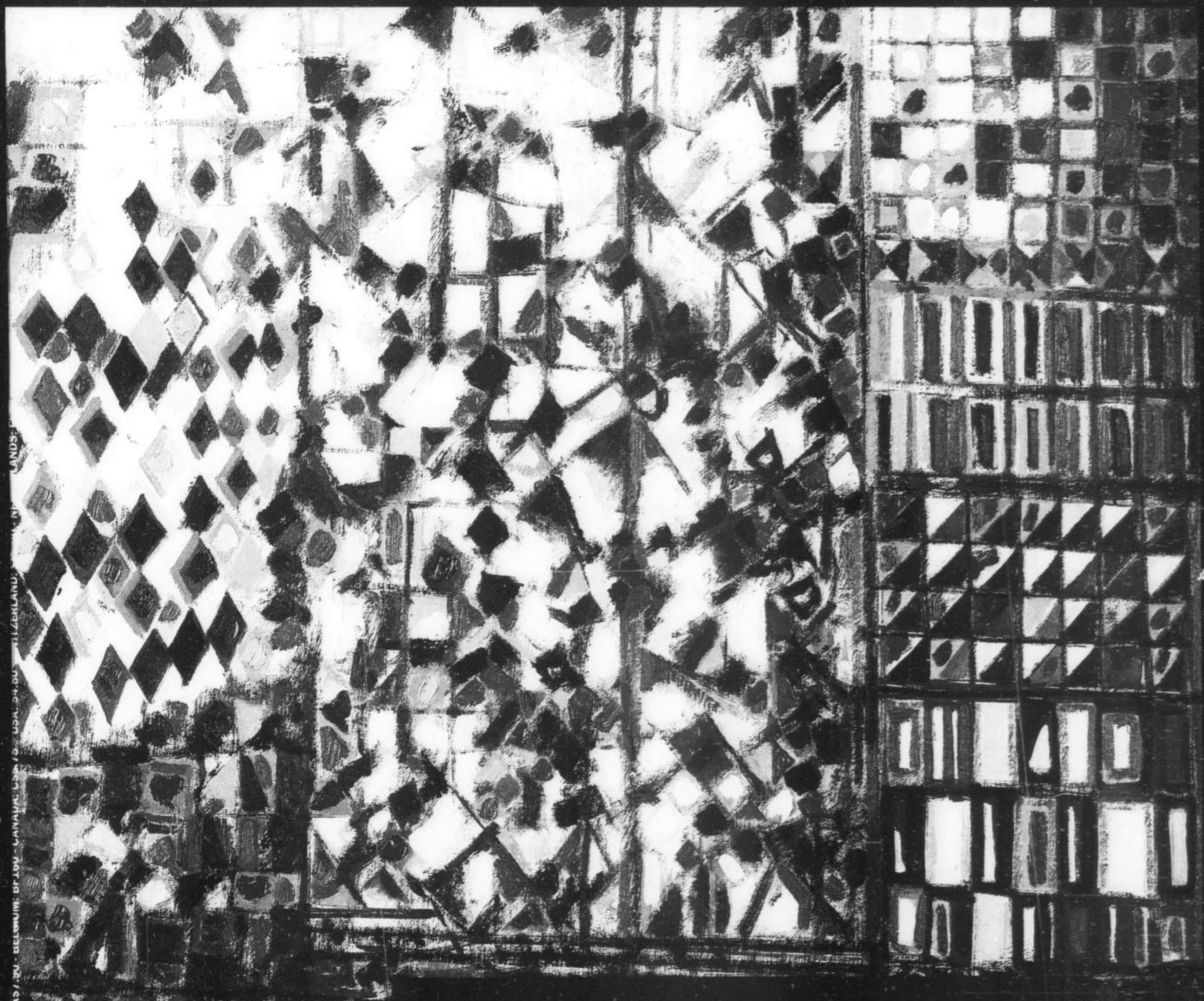
The UNESCO COURIER

INTERVIEW WITH UMBERTO ECO

JUNE 1993



FRANCE: 22FF - AUSTRALIA: A$7.20 - BELGIUM: BF 180 - CANADA: C$5.75 - USA: $4.50 - SWITZERLAND:

M 1205 - 9306 - 22,00 F

MINORITIES

ENCOUNTER

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

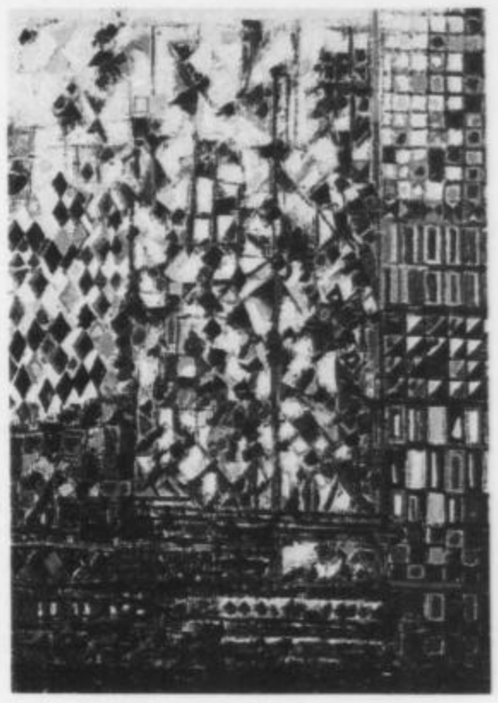
Tristes Tropiques

1991, mixed media on paper (60 x 80 cm)
by Léo Scalpel

This work, which evokes the encounter between America and Europe in 1492, draws its unity from an original synthesis of techniques and cultural references. On to a sheet of paper made in France using traditional methods the artist has glued a papyrus leaf from Egypt (at bottom left) and a sheet of gold leaf (top right). The image, which was computer-generated and printed by ink-jet, represents an Amazonian Indian from Brazil. The moonbeam at top left was spray-painted, and the splash of blue acrylic on the gold leaf recalls the blues of Yves Klein, a leading figure in 20th-century Western art.

4 *INTERVIEW*
Umberto Eco

9
MINORITIES



Cover:
Oil on canvas (1989) by the Portuguese painter Cargaleiro.

Editorial by Federico Mayor

What is a minority?
by Deirdre Meintel **10**

Identity—a card with two faces
by Mauro Peressini **14**

Communities at the crossroads
by Elizabeth Picard **19**

The siren song of self-determination
by René Lemarchand **29**

Guests, immigrants, minorities
by Riva Kastoryano **33**

A sense of difference
by Yves Plasseraud **36**

The Yugoslav quagmire
by Paul Garde **39**

Passover in Sarajevo
by Léon Davico **40**

Why?
by Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat **43**

A protective framework
by Janusz Symonides **44**

46 UNESCO IN ACTION
World heritage
Ait Ben Haddou, a desert-born model for urban design
by Louis Werner

48 Antwerp 93, cultural capital of Europe

49 RECENT RECORDS
by Isabelle Leymarie

50 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

23
Greenwatch

Special consultant:
Jocelyne Dakhlia

The UNESCO COURIER

46th year — Published monthly in 32 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."
EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

UMBERTO ECO

talks to
François-Bernard Huyghe

The Italian semiotician Umberto Eco became known to a worldwide audience through his best-selling novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980), a murder mystery set in medieval times which was later adapted into a popular film. This success has tended to overshadow his thinking on questions of communication and other social issues as developed in such books as *The Role of the Reader* and *A Theory of Semiotics*. In this *UNESCO Courier* interview he discusses the wider significance of his work.

■ *You are a semiologist. You study systems of signs. What relevance does semiology have for ordinary people? Can any practical conclusions be drawn from work such as yours?*

—I regard myself as a philosopher rather than a semiologist, but general semiotics could be said to have become the most important branch of philosophy. Semiologists are perhaps more needed today than ever before. We are living at the end of a period of bipolarization; things seemed simpler before, inasmuch as semiologists from either of the two ideological camps appeared intent on analysing and criticizing the other's system, whereas now so many cultures, so many languages and types of discourse are clamouring for attention, sometimes peacefully but sometimes by force of arms, that it seems to me more than ever necessary to compare and contrast the various communication systems or world-views. This is where semiology comes in. I am not so credulous as to think that semiology can bring peace to the world, or that the Republic of Philosophers could ever be established. But semiotics can play a role in education and civics; it can, for instance, inculcate a certain sense of relativity, of diversity and tolerance.

Work needs to be done among the young, from a very early age, three or four onwards, if only to teach them that there are different languages, so that they grasp the idea of diversity, to show them, for example, that in different languages there are many different names for a rabbit, and that those who call a rabbit by some other name are not necessarily barbarians. Since semiology is concerned with all cultural systems and not only languages, it could help to teach children that there are other ways of dressing, other eating habits, in other words different forms of ritual behaviour in different societies, each of which is meaningful within a given society.

That would be one way of teaching tolerance and understanding. If future generations of children could look upon different systems with the same tolerance as semiologists, we would have made extraordinary progress!

Having said that, enabling people to understand each other better is not necessarily a panacea for the ills of the world. Aspirin does not cure all ailments, but there is no harm in sending some to places where there is an epidemic of malaria.

I do not believe, either, that a shared language or culture necessarily means a brotherhood of man: some of the worst conflicts of the last 200 years have been civil wars between people speaking the same language.

■ *Nevertheless, the mere idea of a certain cultural relativism unfailingly stirs up controversy. Where do you stand in the debate that, rightly or wrongly, sets "cultural relativism" against "universalism"?*

—Cultural relativism argues that our understanding of the world takes various

Semiotics can inculcate a certain sense of relativity, of diversity and tolerance.

forms, from language to religion, and that they lack a common basis of comparison. Taking this argument to extremes, one would have to conclude, for example, that there was no possible way of translating a concept expressed in the language of Hopi Indians into English, or vice versa. That would be absolute cultural relativism. As Thomas Kuhn said about scientific paradigms, they may be incompatible but that does not mean they cannot be compared one with another. The Ptolemaic and Copernican systems are indeed incompatible, but it is possible to compare them, to show their complete independence of one another, but also to understand how the transition from one to the other came about. The concepts of Moon or Earth are not totally different in the two systems, even though the two systems had different ideas about their movements. The semiological approach, that of cultural anthropology or any other approach that pays heed to the diversity of cultures proceeds by comparison. It looks for points where comparisons can be made; it does not shut systems off in totally different compartments, but seeks out common ground between them, and if it does not find any it respects their differences. In my view there is no unresolvable contradiction between cultural relativism and universalism.

To take another example, different languages employ different categories to signify even such simple things as wood. English may use the word "timber" to distinguish the construction material from "wood" in the sense of woodland, but French uses the same word "bois" in both senses. Translation is possible all the same; it bases itself on the possibility that two different languages have a meeting-point; it

I obviously cannot tolerate human sacrifice being practised in my own country, but if I am told to go and invade or colonize a country to stop it being practised there I find myself in a predicament.

is an operation whereby the target language tries to keep as much of the source language as possible and transpose it into its own terms. To translate from German into French, I need to know German and to grasp precisely where the two languages differ. In that sense, there is nothing more universal than translation.

Holism—absolute cultural relativism—would have us conclude that translation is impossible, and that there is no way of enunciating atomic physics in a jungle language or of expressing the problems of jungle-dwellers in Western languages.

A totally different mistake, but one of equal gravity, would be to think that in language there are such things as discoverable universals, and that the diversity of languages could thereby be reduced to a single language. If there are any universal categories, they are such distinctions or opposites as "up" and "down" or ideas connected with our bodies like those of being hungry or being full. There is no need to look much further to find how many things, including the concepts of good and evil, differ even between peoples that are relatively close to each other, but it is still possible to compare two concepts of good and evil and see what they have in common.

We could take for our guidance the metaphor of translation as an image standing for a tolerant world outlook. In purely theoretical terms, translation should not be possible, and yet people do talk to one another and translate or interpret one another's words. In the abstract, by sophistry, the impossibility of movement or anything else can be proved, but in real life people live and move about.

To my way of thinking, an organization such as UNESCO should neither promote cultural diversity to the point where the cultures concerned can no longer comprehend one another, nor claim to assert universal values equally valid the world over. The essential thing is to bring cultures into contact. Any given culture is, generally speaking, capable of "translating" another into its own terms. Even if there are bound to be inaccuracies, mistakes and distortions, it is better than total ignorance.

The same goes even for closely related languages like Italian and Spanish. All Italians think they can more or less understand Spanish and vice versa, but there are misleading cognates in the two languages, expressions that look alike but mean the opposite of each other. Although this means one has to be on the lookout for possible mistakes and misunderstandings, it does not, in practice, stop an Italian and a Spaniard understanding one another reasonably well.

■ ***Understanding each other or understanding the diversity of cultures is one thing, but making value judgements is something else. Isn't there some point at which, even if one has grasped the idea that concepts of good and evil vary from system to system, one has to exercise one's own judgement as to good and evil?***

—This is one of the most serious problems. Somebody once asked me if I looked at such problems through the eyes of a sociologist or of a moralist. My normal answer is that if I have to study a culture where cannibalism is practised, I do so with a sociologist's eye, trying to understand how it is that this culture views cannibalism with approval, but as regards my own conduct, the moralist in me tells me that eating people is wrong. The problem arises when cultures come into contact. Suppose that some lost jungle tribe of cannibals emigrated to this country. Should we, out of respect for their culture, allow them to practise cannibalism here or should we forbid it because it is against the law here?

Situations like these have to be solved on

a case-by-case basis, by deciding where to set the limits of toleration. If a certain culture requires girls to wear the chador, I see no reason to forbid it, since it does not violate my own ethical principles. If a culture, as happens with certain religious sects, bans blood transfusions for sick children, there starts to be a problem because the law in this country says one must help a person in danger. Cannibalism should be banned because it violates our value system; we have to tell the cannibal, "If you come here you have to comply with certain rules." Limits to what is tolerable have to be set, but there are things that are truly "intolerable"—racism, cannibalism, murder and so on.

I obviously cannot tolerate human sacrifice being practised in my own country, but if I am told to go and invade or colonize a country to stop it being practised there I find myself in a predicament. The justification given for colonialism was this idea that we should go to other people's countries and "teach them right from wrong".

Problems like these have to be solved case by case, and are often harrowing. In Italy, for instance, one such question has arisen over population groups that practise ritual infibulation. When they come to our country, a difficulty arises because we consider infibulation an intolerable practice. Some people have suggested there could be special clinics where the infibulation required by their customs could be carried out. For myself, I consider infibulation to border on the intolerable. But where is the borderline between tolerable and intolerable? That is the really difficult question.

There can be no hard-and-fast answer, otherwise we would end up invading the whole world from pole to pole just because such and such a group might have customs that are unacceptable by our standards. These are questions that have to be dealt with, sometimes painfully, case by case.

■ ***We have seen that "cultural relativism" is a controversial subject, but there is another controversy, almost its mirror image, over a certain form of "global culture" or "mass culture" disseminated by the media and the so-called "cultural industries". It has long been criticized by various intellectuals, but your views are, are they not, more optimistic than the opinions of those you have dubbed "apocalyptic"?***

—As long ago as the 1960s I criticized intellectuals who reject mass culture from the outside without taking the trouble to look into it, and I stressed that we could make positive use of these mass media. I am rather more pessimistic now than I was then, because anyone can see, for example, how the ratings war has brought television programmes down to their lowest common denominator in terms of quality; but this is like acknowledging that translation is possible and then ignoring the reality that 80 per cent of translations are appalling because they have been done in a hurry, because translators are badly paid and so on.

Let's not forget that mass culture can also mean the use of new technologies for distance education at university level. We tend to equate mass culture with its most obvious, most commercial outlets such as

The function of poets, thinkers and philosophers is to be attentive to what is going on and bring it to other people's attention so that they in turn can think about it.

some forms of television; but mass culture also represents an opportunity for easier access to culture and education, through diskettes, CD-ROM and suchlike, so why not imagine UNESCO helping to set up a vast mass communication system using radio and television for educational purposes?

The main burden of my criticism in the 1950s and 1960s remains valid to the extent that the intellectual community still in many cases protests about the negative aspects of mass culture without really involving itself in an effort to correct them. You still find people who say that we live in a civilization of the image and that the printed word is on its way out. That is wrong: mass culture has resulted in an increase in the output of printed matter and has given a boost to the reading habit.

Some "apocalyptic" views are uncalled for, but that does not prevent our observing that television and the press are caught in a downward commercial spiral of sensationalism, making up bogus news items and engineering sensational happenings. Mass culture has, however, also taught children to show greater respect for trees and has helped to create greater environmental awareness.

There are positive sides to what the media are doing, the growing awareness of the nuclear threat for instance. I remember that when we were trying to carry out anti-nuclear propaganda in the 1960s with demonstrations, books and so on, people turned a deaf ear. They didn't even know what radioactivity was and didn't want to know. Thirty years on, thanks to films, television and the press, they all have a better understanding of the nuclear menace. It is through the mass media that people in some countries have gained a better idea of the dangers of pollution.

Both aspects have to be looked at: television can be conducive to extremes of vulgarity, abuse, inanity and so forth, but at the same time it can raise public awareness of atmospheric pollution, soften up resistance to traffic control measures, for instance, or persuade people to be careful how they dispose of rubbish. These are realities that must be faced, in the knowledge that some new technology may be invented tomorrow that may change the nature of communications.

That said, some innovations that started out positive may have become negative. Mass car ownership seemed a good thing at first but now road traffic needs to be kept in check. What is needed is to avoid any preconceptions while remaining vigilant.

■ ***Why are intellectuals more and more often called on to show the way?***

—In a sense, this has been the case for thousands of years, since societies have always needed to assign to certain of their members, priests or philosophers for example, the role of discussing values.

It is possible, in the abstract, to imagine a world in which each individual is by turns a hunter, a fisherman, a thinker and so on, but for the time being, as long as society is made up of people most of whom cannot devote themselves to this question of values, there have to be "Indian reservations" where society continues to support people whom it requires to fulfil this role. The problem is that they need to be regarded not as oracles but as channels through which the discussion about values gets to the others. This is the function of poets, thinkers and philosophers, to be attentive to what is going on and bring it to other people's attention so that they in turn can think about it. This role we assign to intellectuals is, I think, almost a physiological function that the body politic cannot do without. Regarding intellectuals as oracles, on the other hand, is more like a social disease. Here again it is a question of moderation. As far as I am concerned, I do not regard it as any part of my mission to be consulted as an oracle, which is why I avoid giving interviews. ❐

Editorial by Federico Mayor

WHAT is a minority? Does a group become a minority simply by virtue of regarding itself as one? Can any and every minority invoke the right to self-determination? Is it conceivable that the map of the world could ever be redrawn to conform with ethnic criteria? Are there any general principles for ensuring peaceful coexistence between majorities and minorities? These are some of the questions raised in the following pages, in an issue of the *UNESCO Courier* which does not claim to be an exhaustive treatment of the problem but an attempt to investigate its complexity. For myself, I should particularly like to emphasize the worldwide dimension of this question, because it throws light both on its most topical aspects and on conditions for a long-term solution.

The context in which the issue of minorities arises today is indeed very closely related to the general characteristics of the age. It is no longer a context of sealed frontiers and isolated regions but one of an integrated global system in which the links of interdependence in finance, technology and communications are growing closer each day. Political, industrial or military decisions made at one end of the world very rapidly have an impact at the other. Because of the scale of production units and the pressures of international competition, regional economic groupings are imposing increasing constraints upon individual countries, to the detriment of their national preferences. Certain role models, symbols and tastes in clothing and food are being propagated worldwide by the mass media.

As a reaction against this trend towards globalization—which is accompanied by growing inequalities between the different world regions—people everywhere are seeking to defend themselves against encroaching uniformity and dehumanization. Individuals and communities alike are thereby voicing their desire to exist, to use their powers of creation, to play an active part in national and international life. Where there is no peaceful and democratic context in which these aspirations can find an effective outlet, extremist, demagogic, xenophobic and even racist ideas begin to spread, transforming the legitimate desire to affirm identity into an aggressive attitude, tending towards isolationism and exclusion and accompanied by a rejection of universal values, disregard for the rights and liberties of the person, and a refusal to seek common ground or to teach the values of tolerance.

The problem of minorities today is a specific instance of this general phenomenon: the globalization not only of economic networks but also of humanist values means that no feasible solution can be based on the establishment of ethnic, national or religious frontiers. Minorities—whether they be cultural communities within a nation or entire regions confronting a centre of industrially developed power—are destined to achieve fulfilment as part of a general democratization of public life, both within each state and worldwide.

The lives of peoples, large and small, today come within the scope of a balance that needs to be established between rights and duties in relation to humankind as a whole, but this balance will only be accepted by all if it commands the allegiance of all, and this in turn presupposes absolute respect for the freedom and dignity of minorities—failure to respect them has so often been the justification for breakaway movements.

Culture is clearly a crucial area of self-fulfilment, the realm in which the particular genius of a people or an individual finds freest expression—provided, however, that it is something other than a memory of the past, looking back towards a mythical identity, provided that it becomes a memory looking towards the future, receptive to others, deriving continual, never-ending enrichment from inner and outer sources.

Minorities and majorities alike, we are all called upon to choose between competing pasts and a common future, between withdrawal into old totalitarian modes that stifle the individual and tear the world apart, and the challenge of freedom for each and every one of us, the challenge of a human race finally reconciled with itself.

WHAT IS A MINORITY?

by Deirdre Meintel

Applied to society, the concept of a minority is not necessarily numerical. Social and historical factors shape a group's consciousness of minority status

IN the West, the issue of minorities goes back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the new or changing political boundaries of European nation-states subjected certain ethnic groups to the domination of other ethnic or national groups. Probably the most influential definition of the concept of "minority" is that first proposed in 1945 by the sociologist Louis Wirth, who wrote: "We may define a minority as a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination."

By Wirth's definition, the existence of a minority implies that a corresponding majority group enjoys higher status and greater privileges; those holding minority status are excluded from full participation and are treated as, and consider themselves to be, "a people apart". To summarize, members of a minority group are "identifiably different", that is, characterized by observable traits that distinguish them from others in the same society; subject to differential treatment from others; and conscious of the discrimination they experience as members of the group.

The anthropologists Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris have proposed several modifications to Wirth's definition. Minority status, in their view, is inherited according to the descent rules of a society, in such a way that an individual is assigned to the minority group even when he or she does not manifest the minority's visible traits. For example, in the American racial system, having any known African-American ancestry has usually been sufficient to place an individual in the "Black" or "Negro" category. Minority status is thus something one is "born into", rather than something acquired later in life. Wagley and Harris also consider that minorities are generally endogamous, since they are normally prohibited from marrying into the dominant group. Such prohibitions have the effect of maintaining the boundaries between majority and minority, and by extension perpetuating the privileges of the majority. Note that what is at issue is not sexual contact between the two groups but rather descent and inheritance. Endogamy (marrying within one's own group) ensures that majority status is passed only to the legitimate children of majority members and so remains inaccessible to anyone not of that group.

While Wagley and Harris' formulation would apply well to many situations of majority-minority relations, it is far from universal in application. For one thing, their criterion of "endogamy" requires some qualification in the light of later research. While it is true that endogamy of the elite, privileged group serves to maintain its boundaries, minorities often marry into other minorities. In fact "intermarriage" between ethnic groups in the contemporary United States often concerns partners of different minority groups. More importantly, recent years have seen the emergence of many groups that see themselves as minorities and organize themselves as such but do not meet the criterion of inherited status or endogamy. We shall return later to the issue of whether, for example, women or homosexuals can properly be considered minorities.

At the crossroads of world cultures

The UNESCO COURIER

The only monthly cultural magazine published in 33 languages worldwide

SUBSCRIBE!
AND OFFER A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO A FRIEND

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

YES, I wish to subscribe to **The UNESCO COURIER**

Language: ☐ English ☐ French ☐ Spanish

☐ **1 year: 211 French francs** instead of 264 FF*
(11 issues including 1 double issue)

☐ **2 years: 396 FF** instead of 528 FF*
(22 issues including 2 double issues)

☐ **Binder: 72 FF** (for 11 issues including 1 double issue)

Name First name

Address

Postal code City Country

YES, I wish to take out a subscription to **The UNESCO COURIER** for a friend

Language: ☐ English ☐ French ☐ Spanish

☐ **1 year: 211 French francs** instead of 264 FF*
(11 issues including 1 double issue)

☐ **2 years: 396 FF** instead of 528 FF*
(22 issues including 2 double issues)

☐ **Binder: 72 FF** (for 11 issues including 1 double issue)

Name First name

Address

Postal code City Country

Please send this form with your remittance, in French francs only, made payable to:
THE UNESCO COURIER Subscription Services, 31, rue François Bonvin 75732 Paris CEDEX 15 (France)
For payments in other currencies, please contact one of the subscription agents whose addresses are given on the other page of this order form.

(*) Total cover price

A Yawalpiti Indian in the Xingu National Park (Brazil). Today the entire Yawalpiti community numbers 300 persons.

More recent writers have given greater emphasis than did Wirth to the political domination exercised by the majority group. It is the greater access to and control of resources—access to health care, jobs, food, education, wealth—that allows one group to control the life chances of another. Put another way, it is the greater political power of the majority that allows it to discriminate against the minority, to treat its members in detrimental ways that may range from stereotyping to extermination.

IDENTIFIABILITY

Wirth's criterion of "identifiability" also requires some clarification. It is all too easy for the dominant group to attribute a minority's inferior status to its unique characteristics rather than to its structural position. This is the process known as "blaming the victim". This may be done, not only in regard to what are conventionally seen as racial groupings, but also in regard to religious minorities, homosexuals and others. Other writers have drawn attention to modern forms of racism whereby "culture" is invoked in so essentialist a fashion (see below) as to constitute a "second nature". Immigrants, for example, may be discriminated against on the grounds of their culture. In such instances, the norms, values, beliefs and practices attributed to them are seen as the basis of their essential difference from and inferiority to majority members.

Left, a decorated house-front in Chicago (United States).

The homeless.

The quality of "identifiability" is an especially pertinent issue at present, given that in North America, at least, one hears much of "visible minorities" in public discourse. The differences thought to be "visible" are in reality those considered socially significant. Thus a North African may be highly visible in Paris, yet less so in Montreal or New York.

In other words, identifiably "different" characteristics do not so much explain power differentials as legitimize them and facilitate their exercise. Furthermore, identifiability is not always supplied by the minority itself. Jews, for example, were required to wear a yellow star in Nazi Germany precisely because their supposed "difference" from the rest of the population might otherwise have remained invisible, giving the lie, one might add, to the grotesque representations of Jews to be found in the Nazi-controlled press and cinema. In other cases, as we shall see, making oneself identifiable as a minority group member is part of developing minority consciousness.

"NEW" MINORITIES

This brings us to the question of what might be called "new" minorities. Recent years have seen increased political consciousness among, and in some cases mobilization of, other types of groups who see themselves as minorities that have been subject to discrimination. Women, for example, would seem to fit Wirth's definition of a minority quite well: they are visibly different, subject to discrimination of various sorts and in recent decades have been conscious of being discriminated against because of being women. Yet it was only in the 1970s that sociologists began to see women's status as separate from that of the men to whom they were attached and the position of women as an issue for the study of social hierarchy and stratification. Indeed, women's differential access to wealth, prestige, health care and in some societies even food, all go to show that, as Rosalind Dworkin put it in the title of an article on women as a minority group, "Numbers do not a minority make".

Homosexuals are another such "new minority", insofar as they have developed a group awareness of suffering differential treatment because of their sexual orientation. In this case, identifiability is of special concern. Many gays and lesbians associate raised consciousness of social injustice toward homosexuals with "coming out", that is, making their sexual orientation public. In the United States, "outing", or making public the homosexuality of individuals in public life, is a strategy favoured by some gays, though it has been more often threatened than actually put into practice.

Another social category that might be seen as a minority, at least in some cases, is the elderly. Age-based discrimination in hiring, forced retirement and other issues of common concern have mobilized group consciousness in North America and Western Europe, where modern capitalism has been associated with devalued status for older persons. Examples of political mobilization include the "Grey Panther" organization in the United States; in Italy, old-age pensioners have been known to organize political demonstrations in recent years. The deaf offer yet another

DEIRDRE MEINTEL
is a Canadian anthropologist who teaches at the University of Montreal. She has carried out research in the Cape Verde islands, among Cape-Verdean Americans in New England and among immigrant groups in Montreal. In recent years her research has focused on social identity and on family relationships in migrant groups.

Deaf-and-dumb actors rehearse a show. Below, Jews wear the yellow star during the Second World War.

example of a social category that is currently in the process of mobilizing as a minority.

There are many contemporary instances of highly diverse categories of disadvantaged people being treated as homogeneous groupings characterized by inferior moral characteristics. Etienne Balibar, for instance, holds that the category "immigration" (or "immigrants") now functions as a substitute for the notion of race. In Canada one often hears generalizations whereby refugees are presented as particularly undesirable immigrants, as "queue jumpers", perpetrators of "welfare frauds" and so on. Several years ago, a nationwide television broadcast in the United States showed through brief interviews with passers-by that "the homeless" are often perceived as a homogeneous grouping, one composed of moral undesirables who are themselves to blame for their circumstances. If such stereotyping were to go on for many years, it is quite possible that these social categories too might develop minority group consciousness.

MINORITY CONSCIOUSNESS

The above examples make it clear that minority formation is a social and historical process. One of the key elements in it is the development of consciousness among those concerned that they are subject to a common discrimination as members of a given category. Thus what might appear as simple social aggregates in one historical period become politically conscious minorities in another.

As mentioned earlier, the stereotypes applied to minorities are generally "essentialist" in character; that is, they refer to differences supposed to be either biological or cultural, but in any case primordial, fundamental and little amenable to change. At the same time, minority group members may themselves adopt an "essentialist" discourse whereby their characteristics are seen as intrinsically different from those of the majority; certain manifestations of negritude, on the one hand, and feminism, on the other, might be viewed in this light. In a context of persecution or discrimination, it is likely that minority members themselves will be led to experience whatever defines them as "different" as the key element, perhaps the only pertinent one, in their social identity.

However, it is our belief that minority consciousness does not necessarily lead to a narrow concern with one set of issues, and with one aspect of social identity, but rather can become the basis of wider solidarities with other groupings who have experienced similar treatment. In the case of ethnic minorities, such solidarities may take the form of transethnic affiliations between groups on the basis of cultural similarities, shared minority status and/or common experiences of discrimination. In the words of Albert Memmi, "The oppressed all resemble each other; the Colonized, the Jew, the Poor, the Woman. . . . The same suffering often calls forth the same reactions." It is not popular in our times to assert such solidarities, yet in a historical period marked by ever-increasing minority consciousness, expressed on ever more narrow bases of affiliation, to the point of becoming a kind of collective individualism, such solidarities may be our best hope for creating human community. ■

IDENTITY— A CARD WITH TWO FACES

by Mauro Peressini

A hard look at the concept of group identity and its impact, for better or worse, on today's world

THERE are, to my mind, two ways of looking at the current upsurge in demands for the recognition of cultural, religious, ethnic, racial or national identities.

On the positive side, the efforts by certain population groups to assert their identity can be regarded as "liberation movements", as strategies for challenging oppression and injustice. What these groups are doing—proclaiming that they are different, rediscovering the roots of their culture, strengthening group solidarity or aspiring to political self-determination—may accordingly be seen as necessary and legitimate attempts to escape from their state of subjugation and enjoy a certain measure of dignity.

On the down side, however, involvement in militant action for recognition tends to make such groups more deeply entrenched in their attitudes and to make the cultural compartments into which they are divided even more watertight. The assertion of identity then starts to turn into self-absorption and isolation, and is liable at any time to slide into intolerance of others and towards ideas of ethnic "cleansing" and xenophobia, racism and violence.

CHANGE AS A CONSTANT OF CULTURE

The main feature of human societies and their cultures has always been not that they have stood still but that they have been responsive to *change*. Instances of isolated societies that have remained unaffected by historical events are exceptions, if not indeed myths, and such societies have seldom prospered.

Almost all societies have, in one way or another, been caught up in history, whether through natural phenomena (disasters or climatic or environmental changes), migratory movements (emigration, immigration, the meeting and intermingling of peoples, or the dissemination of knowledge, beliefs and values), political events (wars and annexations) or economic factors (trade and the spread of technology), and have constantly needed to redefine and change themselves, invent, generate ideas, borrow and acquire, and devise new ways of acting and thinking.

Far from representing an unchanging set of ways of acting and thinking or a finite body of knowledge, beliefs, values, traditions or rules, standards or principles, culture is a living thing, a *process* involving communication and cross-fertilization. It is therefore an exaggeration to talk about the danger of "losing" a culture and about the need to "retrieve", "protect", "safeguard" or "cleanse" it. Since culture is a continuing process of change, acculturation is its mode of existence.

It is because of this constant reshaping of culture by history that a cultural, ethnic, racial or national group is never a uniform entity but breaks down instead into different cultural subunits that are themselves continually undergoing change, such as families and kinship groups; villages, towns and regional groupings; social classes, occupational groups, blue-collar and white-collar workers, managers and bosses; generations, young people and old; men and women; or the mentally or physically handicapped.

Thus, although the fact of being different is at the heart of every group's identity, on the other hand every group contains individuals who share many points of resemblance with people in other groups. According to the cultural aspect on which emphasis is placed (religion, culinary habits, dress, language etc.), groups shift frontiers and overlap, the limits become more blurred, and distinctions between one's own and others' identity become a matter of degree or of place in the same continuum.

Governed by their own hybrid logics,[1] the cultures of all groups are much more like a mobile and open-ended assemblage of many differing

Above, *Portrait of Rabelais* (1951) by Henri Matisse. © H. Matisse Estate. Left, Inuit dance mask (Greenland).

parts than a uniform, stable, self-contained and easily defined entity, especially at the present time, as upheavals of all kinds follow fast on one another, cultures communicate as never before, and populations move about in millions.

A SIMPLIFYING FICTION

At a time of continual changes in ways of acting and thinking, collective identities provide individuals with a means of *simplifying* reality.

This simplification works firstly by transforming the whole set of individuals composing the group (cultural minority, ethnic group, race or nation) into a *uniform* and *distinct* entity, so that the group can be represented as an obvious *empirical reality*. The uniformity of the group is ensured by the *selection* of a limited number of features both as being typical of the individuals forming the group and as being more important than other features in terms of the definition of their identity.

Whereas an objective observer analysing a given population would find an infinite number of possible criteria for describing, grouping together or distinguishing between the individuals being observed, those militating for recognition of their group's identity arbitrarily choose a limited number of criteria, such as language, skin colour or religion, so that group members recognize themselves *primarily* in terms of the labels attached to the group whose existence is being asserted, "black", "white", "Arab", "Muslim", "Jewish", "Christian", "Hindu", "French", "Italian" or whatever.

The distinction between the group in question and other groups is established by *simplifying* the features selected. Whereas the same objective observer could see only continuous variations for each criterion, and would thus be prevented from drawing clear dividing-lines between the groups, those militating for recognition of their identity simplify each criterion by eliminating the variations they regard as secondary and are thus able to speak, for example, of *a* national language, of "whites" and "blacks", or of *the* Islamic or Jewish faith.

Simplification also works by transforming groups into *essences*, abstractions endowed with the capacity to remain unchanged through time. The cultural minority, ethnic group, race or nation concerned is thus seen as being outside of time, while change and the effects of history are denied or underestimated. In some cases, people actually act as though the group had remained unchanged and talk, for example, about the history of the "French", the "blacks" or the "Jewish people", as if those entities had survived for centuries without changing, as if the "French", the "blacks" or the "Jews" of two or five or ten centuries ago were the same people as today, using the same tools and techniques and with the same ways of acting and thinking, the same desires, aspirations, anxieties and pleasures.

In other instances, although the changes wrought by history are acknowledged, the deep-rooted identity of the group is still not questioned. The group is seen metaphorically as an *edifice* that has been collectively shaped and built up over the centuries, or else as a living *individual* who is born and develops. It is when the concepts enshrined in the words "patrimony" or "heritage" are looked at in the context of the metaphor of "work under construction" that they really become meaningful: objects, knowledge, beliefs, values and traditions all represent building-blocks for the collective edifice which have to be carefully stockpiled and must not be lost or destroyed. It is likewise in the context of the metaphor of the "individual" that the concept of the "collective memory" can be understood: cultures, ethnic groups or nations are credited with the faculty of memory and are spoken of as though they were human beings (who can be "humiliated" or "betrayed" or "avenged"). When people are forced to acknowledge the far-reaching changes that history has wrought and when they admit that the identity of the group may no longer be what it was, the present state of the group often comes to be seen as one of "sickness". People then start looking back on some period in the past as having been the time when the group possessed a now tarnished "purity" or a now lost "authenticity". The past—although it was the present for the people living at the time—is regarded as an unchanging state, a baseline to be turned to—as one turns to a remedy—in order to rediscover and re-establish the truth about the group, or its essence.

Cultural, ethnic, racial or national identities are *fictions* that *simplify* social realities, and they have practical effects, two negative aspects of which I wish particularly to stress.

Firstly, they gloss over and disparage the *present* and *contemporary history*. Changes in ways of acting and thinking, contacts between peoples, the patterns of exchanges and interminglings of which both present and past are formed—all these are often discussed in such negative terms as the "contamination" of cultures, the "expansion" of modern Western culture, world-wide "uniformity" and the "disappearance" of human diversity. Some aspects of recent history show there to be an element of truth in these judgements, but to leave things at that would be to run the risk of failing to see what is being created afresh in the crucible of the present. It could be argued, moreover, that a disparaging attitude to the present day and contemporary history is tantamount to contempt for the lives, efforts, aspirations and desires of millions of men and women who are, after all, coping as best they can with the unstable, ill-assorted raw materials that history has handed down to them. Who is to say that they are on the wrong track and that their cultures are not authentic? What right or authority has anyone to say so?

Secondly, the way in which groups are individualized or personalized in the name of identity has negative effects similar to those of the individualism that is creating havoc in the industrialized societies of the West. It is individualism raised to the group level. As a result, the only legitimate principle of behaviour that such groups recognize is the satisfaction of their own self-interest, which lies in maximizing their economic and political profits and in selfishly devising schemes for development and expansion without regard for other people.

Such group individualism ends up with all groups fighting and competing against one another, and leads on to the logical consequence of all individualism, i.e. there can only be "winners" if there are also "losers"—cultural minorities, ethnic groups or nations that cannot fend for themselves, cannot have their own territories or form their own states.

IDENTITY AS A COGNITIVE NECESSITY

Paradoxically, however, it is precisely because identity represents a simplifying fiction, creating uniform groups out of disparates, drawing border lines across a continuum and turning groups into unchanging essences, that it is necessary and indeed essential to the agents of social change. Although it is a factor of division, it is also a factor of *vision*[2]. Like the concepts we use to put names to things and designate ideas, identity categories make it possible for us to understand and grasp reality. In a constantly changing world, they enable us to put names to ourselves and to others, form some idea of who we are and who other people are, and ascertain the place we occupy along with other people in the world and in society. Lastly, as a means of recognizing the members of a particular group (x is an X because he or she acts or thinks in such-and-such a way), identity provides the framework for interpreting, predicting or managing our behaviour or that of other people (x is bound to do this because he or she is an X).

The current upsurge in efforts to assert the identity of various groups can, in fact, be partly explained by the *cognitive function* performed by identity. Naturally, many of these movements can be explained in terms of a tangle of economic and political factors combining the faceless logic of the international system and the special interests of small groups and individuals who look upon cultures, ethnic groups, races or nations only as means to achieve other ends and to manipulate people.

That being said, people would not go along as they do, often in large numbers, with the propositions put to them, in spite of the sacrifices they entail, if there were not a very strong feeling of need for identity, a need to "take stock of things" and know "who we are", "where we come from" and "where we are going", that is accounted for in turn by the increased pace of change in today's world.

Industrialization, the breakneck pace of technological development, the often uncontrolled globalization of the capitalist economy and of the

MAURO PERESSINI,
a Canadian anthropologist, is curator and researcher at the Canadian Centre for Studies on Traditional Culture of the Canadian Museum of Civilizations (Hull, Ontario). He is in charge of the programme of research into cultural groups in Canada originating from Portugal, Spain, Italy and France. His publications include *Migration, famille et communauté. Les Italiens du Frioul à Montréal, 1945-1980* (University of Montreal, 1990).

Cultural transmission in action at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

constraints imposed by financial markets, the glaring intrusions of communications, the media and the products of the cultural industries—all these disrupt not only the everyday material and economic lives of people all over the world but also their symbolic frames of reference. Knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, traditions, rules and standards of behaviour, moral and religious principles are all constantly being called into question. Withdrawal into a world of one's own and a search for cultural or ethnic "roots" come to be seen as attempts to put down markers and to stem the fast-moving tide of time and history.

Individuals need their identity because it makes things less complicated and unsettled, so that they can then put some order not only into their own lives but into the world around them. In this sense, identity also generates reality and contributes to the role performed by imagination or religion in a world that is itself only chaos. Like imagination or religion, identity creates order out of chaos and shapes the world by conferring meaning on it, which is why it can be regarded as a source of liberation in some circumstances.

LINES OF APPROACH

Identity is thus a necessity, but its negative side-effects must be avoided at all costs. How can these two contradictory aspects of identity be reconciled? I propose to confine myself to a few lines of approach.

The first of these relates to what I would call the *mobility of identity*. If any identity, whether it be cultural, ethnic or national, is to function properly—in other words, if its suggested configuration is to be acknowledged as real and legitimate—it has to overlook or disregard the fact that all such configurations are arbitrary and could be drawn in many other possible ways.

This means we must bear the arbitrary nature of identity constructs constantly in mind, not with a view to eliminating all forms of identification and affiliation—which would be unrealistic, since identity is a cognitive necessity for human beings—but simply so as to remind ourselves that we each have several identities at the same time.

The realization that we all have several identities whereby to define ourselves has its uses. During the recent constitutional discussions in Canada, for instance, women from the country's indigenous groups who wanted to hold on to the protection they are afforded under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms opposed attempts by the (male) community leaders to set up an autonomous indigenous government run on traditional lines and thus not subject to the provisions of the Charter.

On this specific issue, the women adopted a shifting identity strategy: first defined as "indigenous", they became "women" when they stressed the danger that the "principles of indigenous government" represented for the autonomy and equality of women in relation to men, then became "Canadian citizens" when they militated in favour of maintaining the Canadian Charter in the event of there being an indigenous government.

When people realize that all identities are arbitrary and that they can switch from one to another to suit the circumstances, they can often respond in a more effective and imaginative way to pressures exerted on them from outside or inside the group. This realization also prevents people from becoming self-absorbed and withdrawing into a single identity, and hence makes it possible for them to engage in dialogue and establish cross-group bonds of solidarity (e.g. with other "citizens" in one of the examples cited above and with other "women" in another) regardless of their cultural, racial, ethnic or national origins.

The second line of approach would consist in *reinstating the present and contemporary history*. At a time when the "end of history" is being predicted and tears of nostalgia are being wept over the past, it is tempting to recall, as the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze has done, that "there are futures that operate in silence and are almost imperceptible",[3] and that culture is being constantly and unexpectedly created by the

cobbling together of new ways of acting and thinking, fresh and original combinations of elements, and counter-cultures.

In this respect, the Third World sets an example. There are, for example, a large number of syncretic cults, such as "Kimbanguism" in Congo and voodoo in Benin, Haiti, Cuba and Brazil, in which Christian rites and modern elements are blended with traditional values or Christian saints are identified with pagan divinities. Similarly, the galloping urban growth that a number of countries are undergoing gives rise, in the Third World, not only to the kind of dehumanization that is seen in the main cities of the industrialized countries but also to an upwelling of cultural and social creativity. In the *poblaciones* of Santiago, the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro or the shantytowns of Mexico City and elsewhere, what is happening in many cases is the regeneration of the social fabric through new principles of solidarity and new forms of social participation, such as self-managed micro-organizations, grassroots economic organizations, religious communities, neighbourhood associations, young people's and women's movements, environmental groups and so on. As regards the economy too, informal-sector activities are springing up all over the place through a mixture of resourcefulness and ingenuity, based on ideas of production and consumption very different from those of the capitalist economy.[4]

In Guatemala, Axi Indians celebrate the festival of St. Peter.

All these examples, which have their counterparts in the most marginalized sectors of the industrialized countries (prisons, teenage gangs and also grassroots organizations), rather than representing the replacement of "traditional" cultures by a "Western-style culture", actually testify to the emergence of a new, third way that, ill-defined as it may be and arising under appalling conditions, nevertheless holds out hope for the future, indeed perhaps for the only possible future.

Identities formulated in these terms deserve our attention. Far from being based on unchanging and exclusive membership rules, like those of blood ties, parentage or mythical origin, many of these identities are *open-ended*, in that there is a continual inflow and outflow of members, which prevents them from taking on a self-perpetuating existence of their own. This is true, for example, of identities based on places of residence, like neighbourhood associations, or those based on membership rules that are not handed down from one generation to the next but are defined by individuals themselves through the institutions they create. "Citizenship" is another form of identity which can be defined in the course of struggles directly related to current issues. A number of these identities also have the advantage of being tied to the present and being short-lived, of lasting for no longer than a particular plan or militant action may last, which prevents them from turning into hard and fast identities.

Such identities, with their changing memberships and limited life-spans, give rise to communities which, vulnerable and unstable though they may be, possess, thanks to this precious "lightness of being", the strength to maintain an enquiring and tolerant relationship with others and at the same time to counter the unhealthy self-absorption that is still so prevalent. ■

1. The French term "logiques métisses" was coined by Jean-Loup Amselle in his book of the same name published by Editions Payot, Paris, 1990.
2. This is how the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu put it when speaking of ethnic or regional conflicts in "L'identité et la représentation. Eléments pour une réflexion critique sur l'idée de région" in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 1980, No. 35.
3. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, Editions Flammarion, Paris, 1977.
4. See Serge Latouche, *L'occidentalisation du monde*, Editions La Découverte, Paris, 1989, and *La planète des naufragés*, Editions La Découverte, Paris, 1991.

Reconciling societies and the groups that compose them must be a priority for modern democracy

COMMUNITIES AT THE CROSSROADS

by Elizabeth Picard

Above, Basque separatists stage a demonstration in Guernica (1992).

In the half-century following the Second World War, the nation-state came to be regarded with approval by every political system and every ideology. In the name of modernization in the West, of socialism in the countries of the Eastern bloc and of development in the Third World, it was expected to guarantee the happiness of individuals as citizens, and of peoples as societies. At a time of globalization and cultural secularization, it seemed inconceivable that violence could again rear its head on the basis of community divisions, as it had in the past.

Today the state appears to have broken down in many parts of the world. It has failed to guarantee either security or social justice, and it has been unable to prevent either international wars or, to an even greater extent, civil wars like those now ravaging Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and Somalia. In the past two decades, many states have, through short-sightedness or self-interest, been slow to respond to the new demands of underprivileged peripheral groups.

In such situations people often respond by replacing their loyalty to the state with loyalty to a community. The community concerned may take one of many forms. It may be a family community of people who trace their genealogy back to a common ancestor, real or mythical; a local community—people living in the same valley, perhaps; a cultural community of peoples sharing the same customs, values and above all language; a racial community—a group convinced that it is physically different from those around it, despite the prevalence of ethnic intermingling; a religious community of members of the same sect or faith.

At this point the community's objective—to be prosperous, to be free, and to defend itself—enters into competition with that of the nation-state. If the state is stable and its institutions are legitimate, it will be in a position to negotiate with dissatisfied communities and to convert their demands into political interests. If it is authoritarian, it will repress what it sees as insubordination or a threat of secession. If it is weak, it will collapse in the turmoil of rivalries between communities. It may also be taken over by one of its constituent communities at the expense of the others. In that case, economic paralysis and foreign intervention often intensify the internal crisis and hasten the transition to armed hostilities.

As one observes the awakening of communities in different parts of the world and sees how armed force is being used to decisive effect by small groups, one is bound to ask a number of questions. Do these new community loyalties

directed against the state not themselves reflect an aspiration to construct a state? Can such a state be viable, based as it must be on the principle of protective exclusion? What excesses may the logic of group uniformity lead to? Is there not a danger that the reaction, today so common, against the excessive uniformity of the nation-state may lead to a rejection of politics, understood as community management, in favour of widespread tribal warfare?

THE QUEST FOR SECURITY

All over the world, retreat into the community-group is closely linked to the quest for security. "There can be no intensely felt sense of identity without some perception of danger," writes the French philosopher Pierre-André Taguieff in *La force du préjugé* (1987). Since in the eyes of the community-group the state has lost what Max Weber called its monopoly of legitimate violence, the only recognized form of security becomes that of the "armed tribe". Arms flow in, sent by sympathetic groups, procured by external powers eager to acquire influence, or bought on a world market awash with weaponry.

Amid the enthusiasm and emotion of collective mobilization, volunteers form local militias which soon, because of the economic crisis, take on paid recruits for whom war is the only source of income, the only means of feeding their families. On the fringe of the militias, local gangs take advantage of civil disorder to terrorize the population and hold it to ransom. The militias enforce their law on political parties and on civil society. Within each community warlords take the lead in mobilizing the group and are the main architects of the "invention" of its identity.

Under their leadership, organizing the defence of the community becomes the cement that binds the community together. "We need a war to bring us together and give us a common identity," said the leader of a proscribed Northern Ireland paramilitary group in 1992. The militia sets out to dominate a piece of territory and control access to it, then to make it homogeneous by forcing people to move out and by perpetrating massacres. For if the horror of "ethnic cleansing" has reared its head again fifty years after the collapse of Nazism, obsession with the security of the community causes forced and massive exoduses of groups whose rights within a given piece of territory are just as firmly based in history (or myth) as those of their persecutors. Attempts to preserve the security of the community by expulsions create a sense of injustice in another community nearby.

The militia builds walls and barricades, transforming zones of contact with other communities into an impassable no-man's-land. Direct contact and mixing between the different populations come to an end and are replaced by ideological relationships as communities are caught in the toils of mutually hostile propaganda.

This process whereby militias, without any precise military or political objectives, turn their communities into fortresses has come to be known as Lebanonization, after the pointless and destructive conflicts that tore Lebanese society apart for more than fifteen years (1975-1990). Once the break with the other communities has been made, the violence of the militias is soon turned on their own people. The prevailing view is that internal treason or defection is even more dangerous than the external threat. The militia will use all kinds of intimidation and coercion, from shows of force to taxation and conscription, from admonition to kidnapping and murder, to repress any sign of deviation and any move towards co-operation between communities or any questioning of the single-minded attitude its power is based on. By stirring up fear and encouraging the community to retreat into itself, coercion replaces consensus as society's motive force and takes the place of the law at the heart of the collective conscience.

INVENTING A COMMON IDENTITY

Use of force is the hallmark of the process of community consolidation, but it is by no means its only characteristic. The group's new leaders also go in for social engineering, creating public services and social support funds exclusively reserved for members of the community. The arms trade, often linked to drug trafficking, provides the militias with illicit funds to keep their supporters on their side. But it is principally by robbing the state (controlling customs receipts) or by taking its place (taxing business and trade and distributing necessities) that the militias acquire usurped legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

The warlords use terror and the redistribution of society's wealth to begin a more ambitious and in the long term more revolutionary process, the definition of a specific identity for the group. They base this definition on some form of difference, objective or subjective, which has hitherto been no more important within the state than regional, professional or class distinctions. From now on, however, all these factors will

Fleeing the fighting in war-torn Beirut.

fade into insignificance beside one fundamental distinction: that between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, that between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, that between Basques and Spaniards, or between Kurds and Turks, or that which divides the different clans of Somalia, even though they are all Sunni Muslims speaking the Somali language.

Led by its new chiefs, the community sets out to explore its new identity, which it enriches and transforms by drawing on a stock of shared symbols, myths and images that command loyalty. Communities that are fighting for the control of territory appeal to history, in other words to their conflicting collective memories in which each sees itself as the victim of a hated adversary. They invoke religion, but take from religion only dogmatic certainties conducive to intolerance. They manipulate dubious notions of collective psychology that all tend to "prove" their own moral and cultural superiority over the groups around them.

Intellectuals, universities and clerical bodies are called on to help; sophisticated communications

Crowds attend the funeral of a civil rights demonstrator killed in 1971 in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

and crowd-manipulation techniques are set in motion. Young people are a particular target for the business of identity-construction. Several studies in Lebanon and Northern Ireland have shown how receptive they can be to the language used to construct a sectarian frame of mind and how they become increasingly indifferent to democratic values. If the frustrations of the community generated the initial tensions, inter-community warfare in its turn helps to sharpen the sense of difference, to increase the gap between groups and to make it impossible for them to coexist within a single state.

But as the anthropologist Benedict Anderson has pointed out, a community that is "invented" in this way (in a dual sense of being both discovered and created) can never be other than an "imaginary community" that is essentially no more legitimate than the "national" community it rejects, from which it wants to secede or whose place it wishes to take. For the logic of community identity and security is ultimately nationalistic; it seeks to establish a state for the community. It is obvious that this logic, if it goes unchecked, must lead to a proliferation of ever-smaller states, since each sub-group in turn can invoke its own "distinctness", in a process that ultimately ends up at the level of the individual human being.

A NEW RULE OF LAW

Disturbed by the claims of the communities within it, the modern state oscillates between two temptations. The first is to forcibly repress the demands of the communities and to proclaim itself the only guarantor of the security of all. In the name of national unity, territorial integrity, the equality of its citizens and a non-partisan secularism, the state can use its powerful resources to reject the demands of communities—it may even go as far as genocide to ensure that order prevails. Contrariwise, there is now a big temptation to respond to community demands by questioning the very nature of those states that were constructed more or less artificially after the two World Wars. Czechoslovakia, for example, has sadly but calmly decided to split into two. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, is giving a new and dramatic meaning to the word "Balkanization": not only are the republics separating from one another, but within each one the so-called "confederated" regions, held together by loose ties, are also splitting apart. Thousands of kilometres away in Somalia, eight "clan regions" aspire to separate from one another.

Even if they have the merit of guaranteeing the security of the communities involved (and this is by no means certain), can such divisions make sense in a world of ultra-rapid communications and industrial gigantism? Will these regions not lack the redistributive resources necessary to promote economic growth and social mobility in such limited areas?

Without returning to the age of Empires, whether Ottoman, Russian or Austro-Hungarian, the modern state must respond to the new militancy of its constituent communities, and to their legitimate quest for security. It must do so by inventing what the French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron called a "peace through law" that would guarantee justice both for the state as a whole and for its parts, and respect the claims of both reason and the emotions. The problem is one of reconciling nationalist demands with the exercise of democracy. Before it can be solved, progress will have to be made in international law (particularly with regard to the formulation of community and minority rights) and in constitutional law (with regard to definitions of decentralization, association and devolution).

At a time when international organizations and communities of states are becoming more important, the nation, and therefore the state, no longer holds a monopoly on democracy. For this reason alone it should find a way of accommodating local aspirations. ■

ELIZABETH PICARD,
a French specialist in the Arab countries of the Middle East, is engaged in research at the Centre for International Studies and Research of the National Foundation for Political Sciences (Paris). Her publications include *Liban, Etat de discorde* (Paris, 1988) and (as general editor) *La Question kurde* (Brussels, 1991).

GREENWATCH

THE UNESCO COURIER — JUNE 1993

DOSSIER

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ACTION

BY FRANCE BEQUETTE

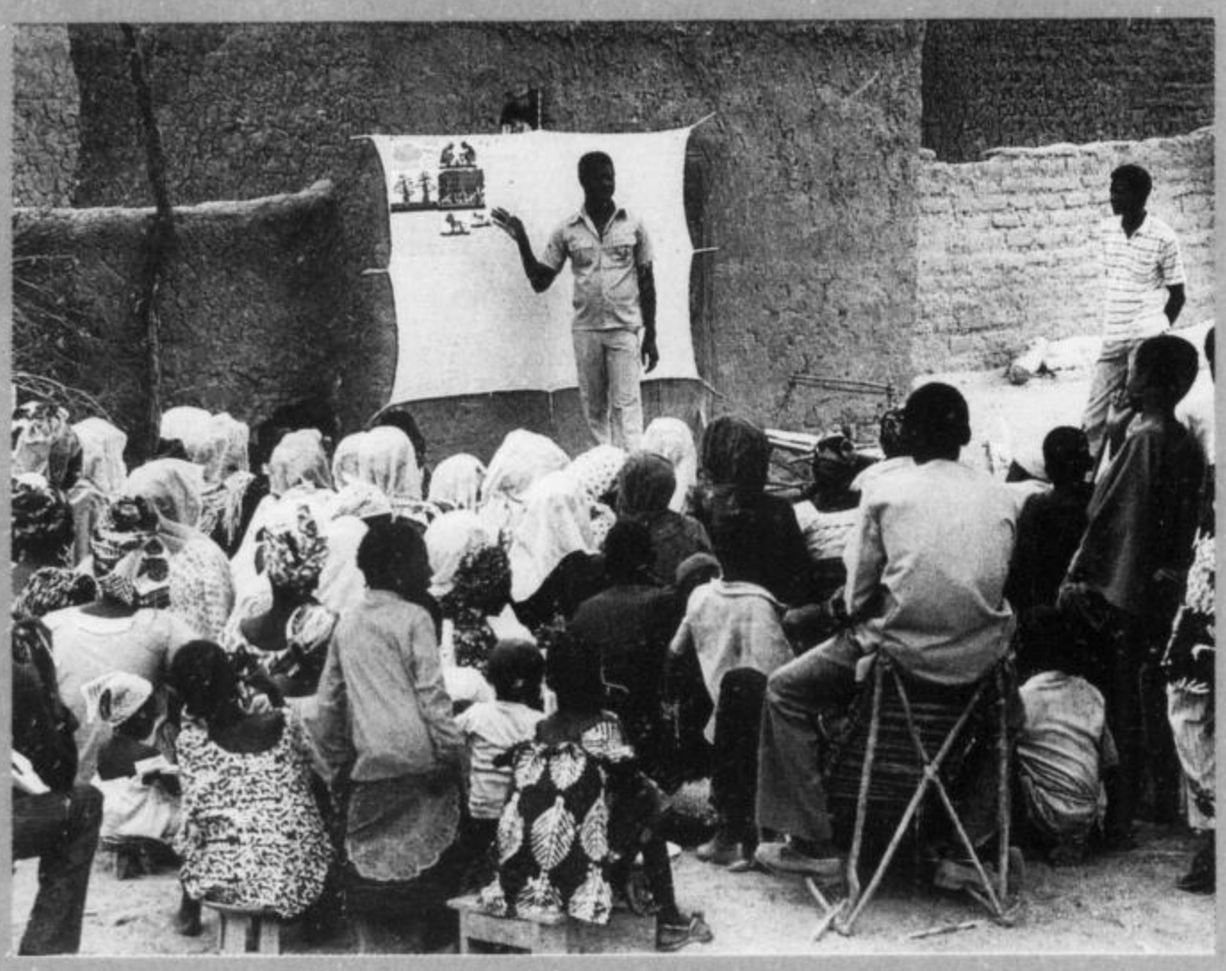
THE *Courier*'s "Greenwatch" section is now a year old. In the course of looking into programmes in progress around the world and listing available environmental education documents, we have come across many initiatives that we wanted to share with our readers. The time has now come to take stock of the most significant experiments carried out in the South and the North alike, of the obstacles they have encountered and the solutions that have been proposed.

UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) define environmental education as "a permanent process in which individuals gain awareness of their environment and acquire the knowledge, values, skills, experiences, and also the determination which will enable them to act—individually and collectively—to solve present and future environmental problems".

Experience shows that there is an enormous gap between theory and practice. The object is not just to increase knowledge, but also to change ways of thinking and the behaviour patterns arising from them. It is relatively easy to communicate information, to explain, for instance, why glass bottles should be sent back for recycling ▶

Fuel-efficient stoves produced by members of a women's co-operative in Kenya.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ACTION



A meeting of village women in Senegal.

People will be unwilling to put recommendations into practice unless they clearly see the justification for them. A farmer will take some persuading that by cutting down the timber he badly needs he may be causing erosion and flooding downstream. It is pointless to recommend expensive environmental solutions where there is no money. It will be hard to convince a manufacturer to stop pouring toxic wastes into a river—even though he knows it is dangerous—as long as it is common practice and the authorities have nothing to offer in the way or why chemical substances should not be thrown out with household waste. It is harder, and takes longer, to alter the mindsets that underlie certain types of behaviour—the attitude of some African women, for instance, who paradoxically prefer murky river water to the clean water from a standpipe because "it has some taste", the attitude of people who pour used motor oil into the sewage system, or that of people who have always burned down forests to make clearings for grazing land.

UNEP and UNESCO have put great efforts into the establishment of an International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP). Some excellent documents have been produced, but they need to be made more widely available, in more language versions and at lower cost, and in any case a document, no matter how good it is or how well translated, is all but useless unless it is adapted to the specific needs of its intended readers. It is essential, especially in the developing countries, for local concerns and realities to be understood, then explained by respected community members.

An information campaign on a reforestation project in a Mali village.

of collection, disposal or recycling facilities.

There may also be serious conflicts of interest between government departments. While one sells large, sometimes excessive, quantities of wood in order to meet foreign debt repayments, another builds roads, and a third is looking for new energy sources, the department with responsibility for the environment may not have an easy time putting across its point of view.

Effective environmental education may, however, trigger vast movements of public opinion that can sway government policy. When, for example, it was planned to construct a hydroelectric dam at Nam Choan in the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary, the largest forest in Thailand, a nationwide campaign was immediately undertaken to focus attention on the drawbacks and dangers of the project, which included the flooding of a unique ecosystem and the extermination of some extremely rare animal species. Under the strong pressure of public opinion, the project was cancelled and the sanctuary was subsequently included on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Action to protect the environment—in the form of demonstrations, media campaigns or civil disobedience—often has subversive overtones, as in the case of certain confrontations staged by anti-nuclear activists in Western Europe, or Greenpeace actions against French underground nuclear tests in the Pacific, while the *seringueiro* (Brazilian rubber tapper) Chico Mendes was murdered for wanting to protect his forest.

To be credible, environmental information must be objective and must include and explain contradictory views. The nature of the political context is also of considerable importance: those involved in environmental education must enjoy civil rights and be legally protected.

Despite UNESCO's efforts to encourage press freedom, journalists in many countries are all too often public employees subjected to censorship, unable to report freely, for instance, on a pollution problem or an epidemic for fear of harming the tourist industry, while the fear of losing their jobs often makes journalists practise self-censorship, with harmful effects all round. Journalists must have access to data which are both scientifically correct and relevant, i.e. related to local realities.

Despite all the statements of intent produced by international conferences, development and the protection of the environment still do not live in harmony together. "Powerful economic interests," explains an expert, "tend to threaten both the livelihood of the local population and the natural environment." Environmental education must adapt to this situation and invent new strategies. ■

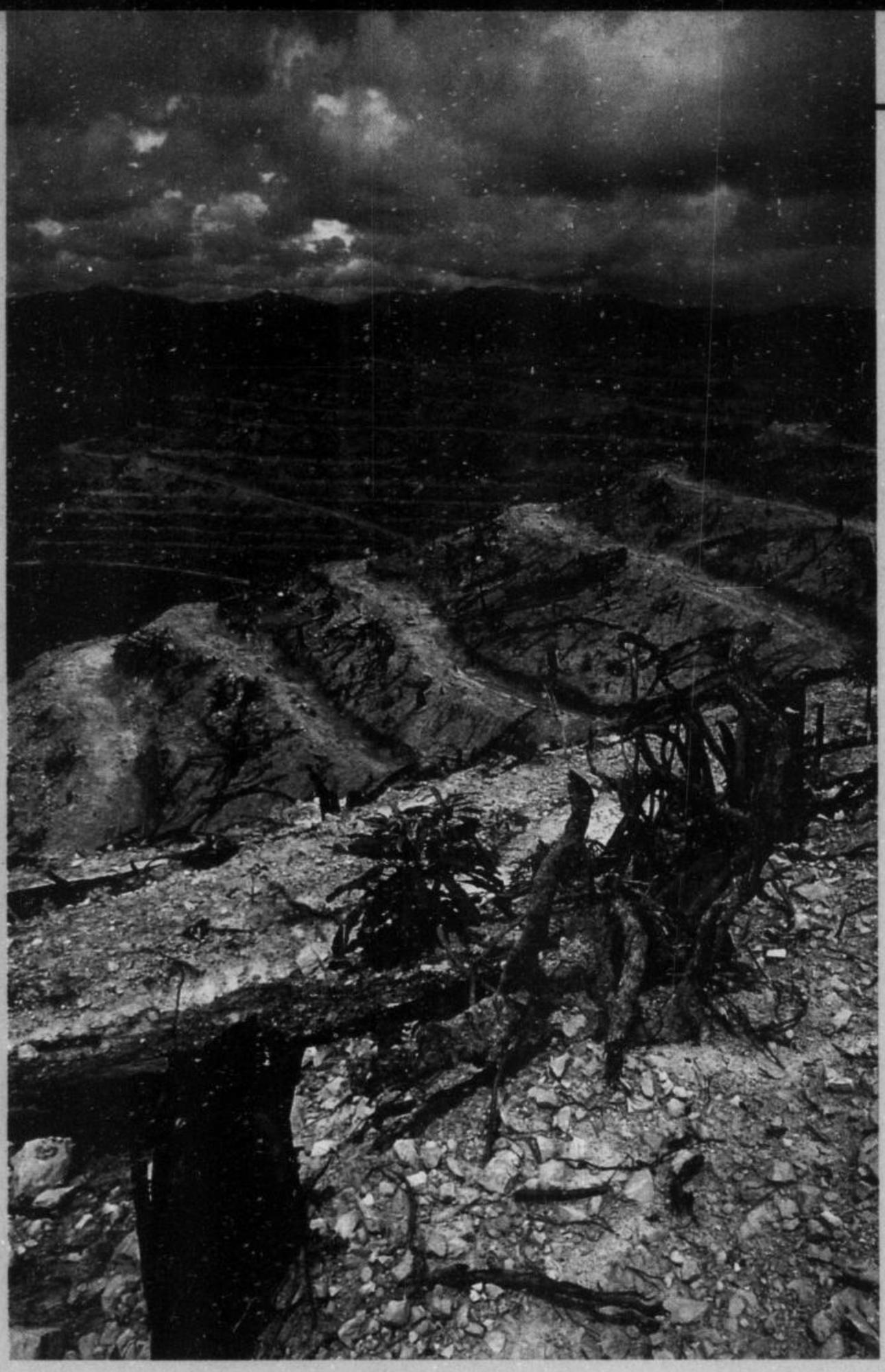
This dossier is based on a bilingual (English-French) document published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Environmental Education, an Approach to Sustainable Development*, which includes reports on ten projects carried out in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Young people in Manila (The Philippines) celebrate Earth Day, an annual festival for the protection of the environment that takes place in many countries on 22 April.

FRANCE BEQUETTE
is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions. Since 1985 she has been associated with the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news-agency journalists.

FORESTS—ADVANCE AND RETREAT

The Forests Committee of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), meeting in March 1993 in Rome, noted that during the 1980s 154 million hectares of tropical forest disappeared, whereas forest resources in the industrial countries grew. According to an FAO study, forests cover 56 per cent of the land surface area in Latin America and the Caribbean, 24 per cent in Africa, and 35 per cent in Asia where, though this is the region where deforestation has been most intense, 26 million hectares were reforested in the same period of time. Forest cover in developed countries is constantly increasing, but the forest is under threat from air pollution, fires, and certain wild animals. ■



A SOLAR SUMMIT

The potential of solar power will be discussed at a "World Solar Summit" to be held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 5 to 9 July 1993. The meeting will take place exactly 20 years after a similar international congress, "The Sun in the Service of Mankind", helped to arouse interest in solar energy. According to the organizers, this year's event should provide "an opportunity to take a substantial step forward in formulating a World Plan of Action to develop and use renewable energy resources effectively". The term "solar" is being used symbolically to designate all renewable energy resources and technologies, from solar electricity to biomass, wind and ocean power. But until oil becomes more expensive or scarcer, who will be prepared to invest in projects that remain on the drawing board for want of real political support? ■

FUELLING A CONTROVERSY

The Proalcool programme launched in Brazil in 1975 appears to have some drawbacks. Methanol, used as a petrol substitute, is made from sugar cane. In order to produce more cane, the Atlantic forest in the Nordeste province continues to be cleared and has dwindled from one million to 135,000 square kilometres. The Secretaries of the Environment of the states in this part of the country are aware of the threat and have joined in a forest conservation programme run by the organization Mata Atlantica which is already being put into effect in eight southern and southeastern Brazilian states. The $200-million programme is supported by the United Nations through UNESCO. Which is preferable: green fuel or a green forest? ■

BLEACH VERSUS BACTERIA

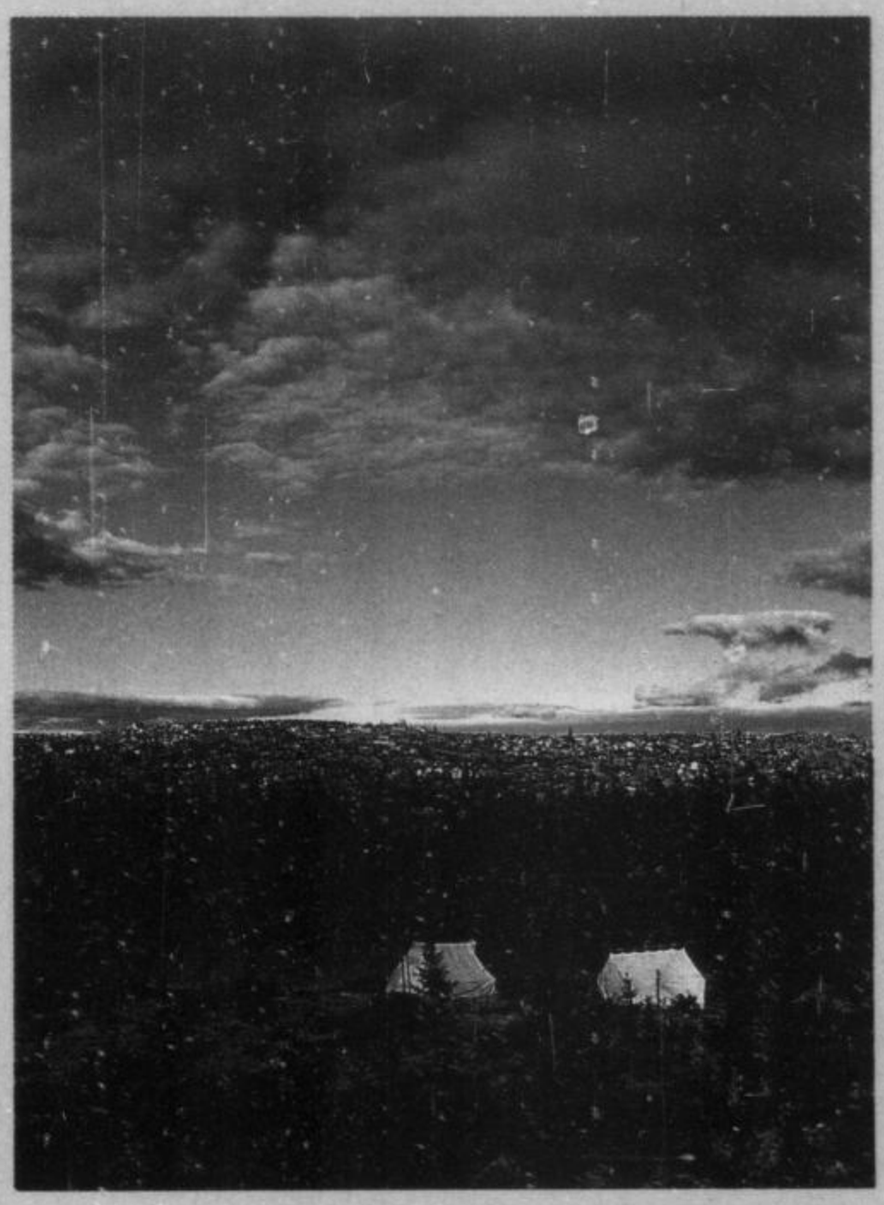
Research conducted in 1989 by Professor Dodin of the Institut Pasteur in Paris confirmed that Javel water, a common bleach containing sodium hypochlorite, salt and water, is one of the most powerful and cheapest disinfectants available. Two or three drops of 12° bleach are enough to kill the bacteria in a litre of water in thirty seconds, or to disinfect raw vegetables. The advantage of this for the countries of the South is that it obviates the need to boil water, thereby saving wood, while providing effective protection against cholera. What is more, this humble substance is environment-friendly: it self-destructs in the course of its action, releasing oxygen and leaving just a little salt behind. ■

RETURN OF THE GRAY WOLF

American environmentalists and the National Wildlife Federation are campaigning to reintroduce the gray wolf into Yellowstone National Park in the northwestern United States. More than 80,000 wolves were killed in the state of Montana between 1883 and 1918, and the species completely disappeared from the area in the 1930s. Local farmers are not happy about a project likely to expose their livestock to this ill-famed predator. They argue that there are still plenty of gray wolves in Alaska and Canada and that there is no real threat to the survival of the species. The reintroduction of the lynx in the French Vosges and Jura mountains poses a similar problem: even though the move is theoretically favourable to the balance of the ecosystem, it creates hostility on the part of local people. Is it better to override such objections or to accept a "simplification" of nature? ■

GULF MARINE LIFE IN JEOPARDY

A research vessel chartered by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) returned from a six-month mission in the Gulf with dismal news. Marine life on the Saudi Arabian coasts has virtually disappeared and 90 per cent of the coral reefs off the coast of Kuwait have been destroyed. The destruction of Kuwaiti oil wells by the retreating Iraqi army sent some 1.3 billion litres of oil into the waters of the Gulf, 25 times as much as the wrecked tanker *Exxon Valdez* spilled onto the coast of Alaska in 1989. Whoever said the Gulf War was a "clean war"? ■



WHAT TO DO WITH WASTE?

According to the American nongovernmental organization INFORM, the 180 million tonnes of waste generated in the United States each year would form a tower 42 kilometres high if packed tightly onto a football field. This evocative image is all the more disturbing because per capita garbage output is increasing, while existing disposal sites are saturated and communities are opposed to new ones being established in their neighbourhood. INFORM, which is backed by foundation and government subsidies and by individual and corporate donations, aims to mobilize all the interested parties. Among other activities, it publishes simple waste-prevention advice for schools and a series of intelligent, practical manuals. The contact address is: INFORM, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, Tel: 212 689 4040. ■

1993, YEAR OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

"We are just one more acting element in the biosphere, no more and no less important than the others, and we haven't the right to submit the other elements to our excessive needs and our domination," writes Rémy Kurtness, chief of the Montagnais Council of Lac-Saint-Jean in Quebec, Canada. The Montagnais people live on a vast area located in Quebec and Labrador. "Our forefathers always rotated their hunting grounds, just like farmers who periodically leave their lands fallow to let the soil rest. Land can be productive as long as it is respected. It cannot overproduce, and it certainly cannot be bled to death." The United Nations has proclaimed 1993 the Year of Indigenous Peoples, providing an opportunity for everyone to share the wisdom of those who love their land and are devoted to harmonizing development with nature and wildlife. ■

INITIATIVES

On this page we launch a feature entitled "Initiatives", which will highlight examples of environmental action in different parts of the world. We invite readers to send us details of their own experiences in this field for possible publication in this new column.

THE GARDEN CITY OF FOUMBAN

ABOUT 400 kilometres northwest of Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, a small kingdom of some 7,500 square kilometres, perched 1,000 metres up on a plateau, enjoys the good life.

From his residence in Foumban, Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya reigns over 350,000 Bamoun. When he succeeded his father in July 1992, he became the nineteenth ruler of a dynasty founded, so he claims, in the fourteenth century. His grandfather built a splendid three-storeyed ochre and pink palace in 1920, its 60-metre-long façade decorated with carved wooden balconies. UNESCO took part in its renovation eight years ago.

Blessed with very fertile land and generous rainfall, the population is self-sufficient in food. Not only are the trees all heavily laden with fruit, but Foumban is also a model of environmental management. Waste ground is weeded to prevent poisonous snakes from breeding there, and every available square metre is cultivated. Beans, corn and cassava grow in plots alongside the footpaths, rows of banana trees line the roadsides, and the huge spear-like leaves of the *macabo* sprout up above the ditches. Foumban is a fine example of the kind of urban gardens whose establishment is encouraged by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). ■

THE SIREN SONG OF SELF-DETERMINATION

by René Lemarchand

When empires disintegrate, the logic of self-determination can be exploited by extreme nationalist ideologies, with terrible consequences

A group of menhir-like sculptures adorned with symbolic mosaic decorations mark the spot where Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan meet.

"NATIONALISM . . . is nothing without the creation of nation-states, and a world of such states, fitting the present ethnic-linguistic criteria of nationality, is not a feasible prospect today. . . . Only a handful of fanatics would, it is safe to say, regard this achievement of national/communal self-determination as more than marginally better than an acutely unsatisfactory status quo."

So wrote the British historian Eric Hobsbawm in 1990, in his book *Nations and Nationalism since 1780.* His prognosis is not untypical of the views held by most observers on the eve of the implosion of the Soviet empire. Almost invariably, speculation about the impending transformations of Soviet communism stopped short of "Balkanization" as a plausible scenario. Rational choice arguments pointed to the senselessness of trading "an unsatisfactory status quo" for the uncertainties of ethno-regional self-determination. On the left, much the same conclusion was reached by advocates of the "proletarians have no fatherland" thesis. But perhaps the most prevalent assumption was that the collapse of communism necessarily implied the advent of "free-market democracy", thus creating the very inducements needed for the maintenance of multinational state systems.

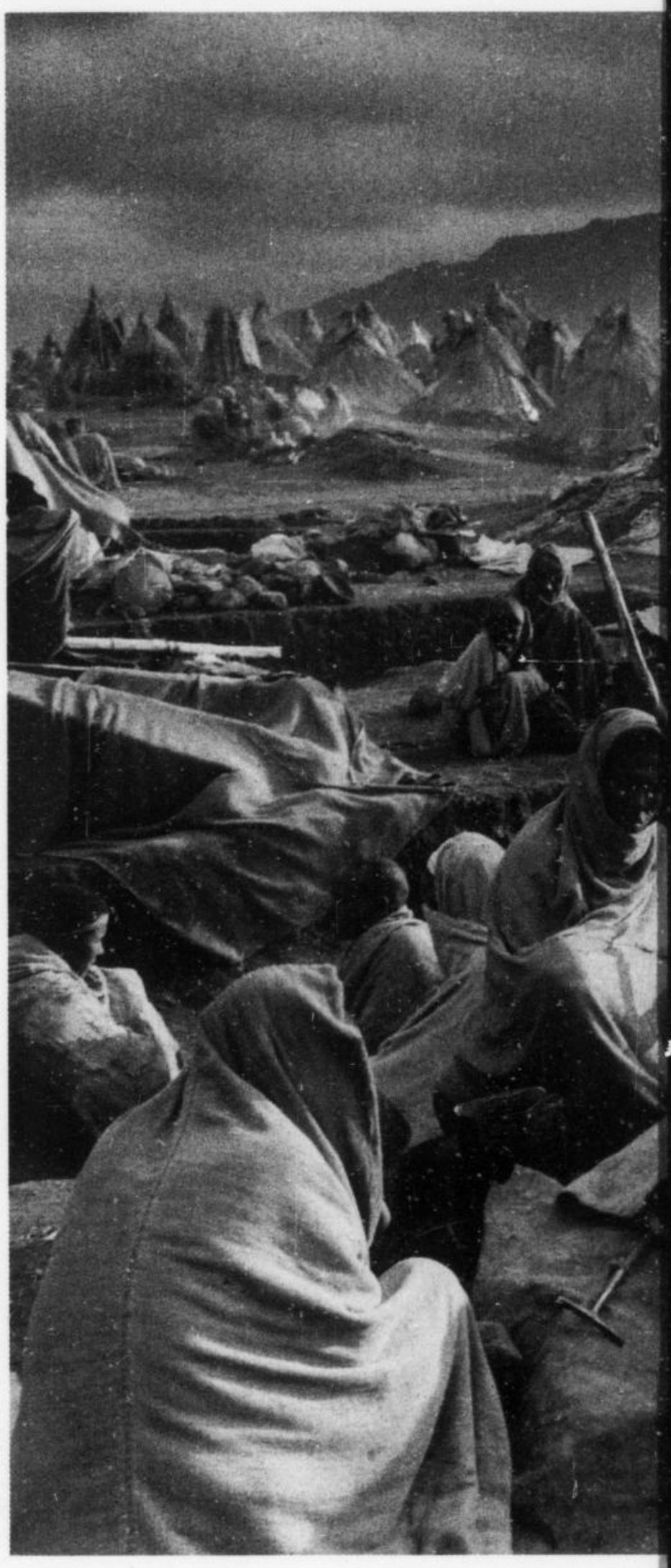
Almost totally left out of the accounting was the alternative scenario of crisis and anarchy now unfolding in much of East and Central Europe. In one state after another, from Georgia to Azerbaijan and from Tajikistan to Moldova, the tensions between human rights and newly acquired national sovereignties have reached alarming proportions, with formerly oppressed minorities

asserting themselves as the principal vectors of oppression and violence. Conversely, in most of these states, the once dominant Russian majority has been fragmented into embattled ethnic minorities, up against chronic violence (as in Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan) and systematic political discrimination (as in the Baltic Republics).

The parallel with the massive re-ordering of political loyalties that followed in the wake of European decolonization can hardly go unnoticed. Just as the impending withdrawal of colonial controls from much of Africa and Asia stimulated the rise of a host of nationalist and ethno-regional movements, the advent of perestroika has had a similarly catalytic effect on the crystallization of ethnic claims and counter-claims. In Eastern Europe as in much of Africa and Asia the logic of self-determination carries within itself the seeds of seemingly endless conflicts. As more and more ethnic groups seek to reclassify themselves as potential nations, others strenuously resist incorporation in the name of their own claims to self-determination.

ETHNIC MANIPULATION

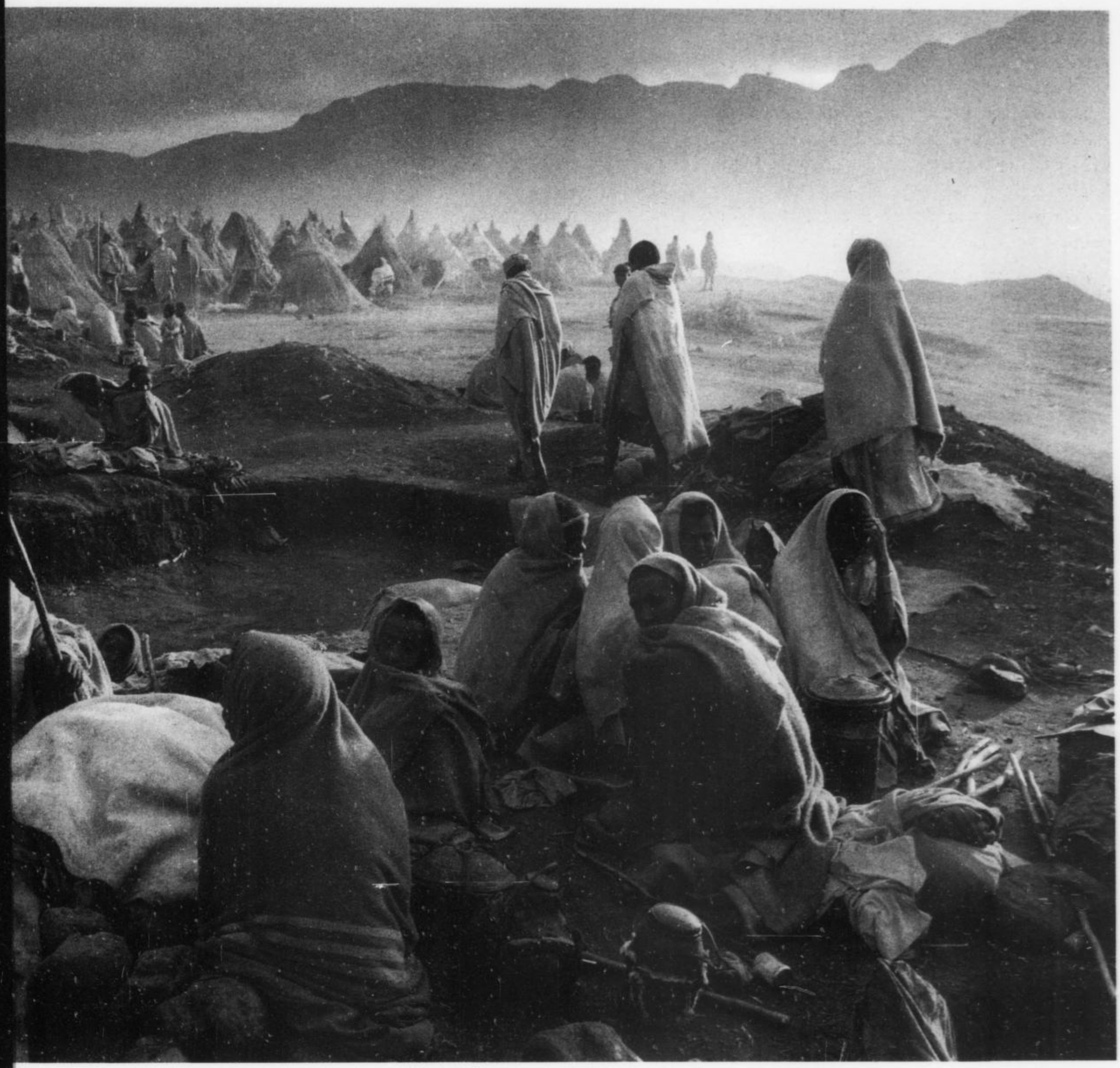
The violence that has accompanied the redrawing of state boundaries bears ample testimony to the threat posed to human rights and democracy by the excesses of self-determination. Where group rights defined in terms of assumed blood ties and ethnicity are held up as a normative standard against individual rights, there can be no basis for democracy. The same is true of situations where the claims of the majority are exercised to suppress the rights of minorities. Implicit in such slogans as "Georgia for the Georgians", "Sri Lanka for the Sinhalese" or "India for the Hindus" is the denial of the hallowed notion that the test of a democracy lies in its treatment of minorities.



Right, a refugee camp at Korem, Ethiopia (1985). Below, refugees in Thailand.

Nowhere in the world does territorial sovereignty coincide with ethnic identity. The boundaries of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Soviet empires are no less artificial than the lines drawn by European colonizers around their imperial domains in the last century. Even in the case of so-called "ethnic cleansing", new patterns of fragmentation are bound to emerge behind the façade of shared cultural commonalities.

"Ethnic cleansing": what the horribly antiseptic metaphor conveys is a definition of the "other" as a vector of social contamination. The intent, in short, is to give moral justification to the physical suppression of culturally distinct communities. Whether defined in terms of religion, language or other cultural traits, real or assumed, ethnic minorities often end up being the prime



targets of ethnic cleansing. The most important point, however, is that in almost every instance the "other" is being redefined, recontextualized, and in the process almost dehumanized. The Holocaust is an extreme example of how the dehumanization of an entire group of people helps justify its physical annihilation. A strikingly similar phenomenon lies behind the genocidal killings in Bosnia, where Muslims are now being reduced to a sub-human category by certain ideologues, and treated as such.

Politicized ethnicity does not invariably translate into genocidal violence; yet it always involves a measure of political manipulation. Contrary to what is often assumed, ethnic nationalism does not just emerge full-blown from the mists of history. It is the product of complex social and economic forces often set in motion under the aegis of the colonial state. The critical factor, however, is the part played by ethnic entrepreneurs in stimulating the awakening of a collective self-awareness.

If ethno-nationalism is first and foremost manipulated nationalism, in this process historical memory plays a crucial role. It mixes facts with fiction, it squeezes reality into symbolic frames and invests the past with new meanings. "Imagined communities" thus take on a reality of their own. The ties that bind are not blood ties or kinship ties but what Paul Veyne calls "*l'imagination constituante*". It is sadly ironic that some of the worst examples of ethnic killings should have happened among communities that are culturally almost indistinguishable, and which for centuries had lived in peace with each other.

The devastating effects of selective memory as

a form of political manipulation are nowhere more evident than in the exalted brand of ethnic chauvinism exhibited by the extremists who set themselves the task of "cleansing" Bosnia of Muslim and Croat elements. While the first are seen as a living reminder of Turkish domination, and are collectively referred to as Turks even though none are able to speak a word of Turkish, the second are collectively identified with the horrors of the Nazi-installed Croatian fascist state during the Second World War. Totally obliterated from the collective consciousness is the fact that Serbs, Croats and Muslims lived at peace with each other for centuries prior to the Second World War. This is where the resistance of the people of Sarajevo carries a powerful demonstration effect: it demonstrates that communities of mixed origins can indeed live in harmony.

ESCALATING VIOLENCE

Again, to see in the savage bloodletting in Ayodhya and elsewhere in India nothing more than an age-old antagonism between Hindus and Muslims misses the point. Rather than a religious confrontation between mosque and temple, what is at issue here is a conflict of nationalist ideologies activated through the symbolic manipulation of Ram and Babur, the first identified with the most potent of all gods in the Hindu pantheon, the second with an alien, Turkic-Mongol conqueror. In the contemporary discourse of Hindu fundamentalists the myth of Ram—encapsulated in the ubiquitous slogan of "Jai Sri Ram!" ("Hail to the Lord Ram!")—emerges as a powerful symbol of cultural identity and a rallying-cry against the Moghul conquerors. Behind the threat posed to the survival of Muslim communities also lies a major challenge to the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect embedded in what was once known as the "Hindustani culture"—the fragile fusion of Hindu and Muslim influences which also formed a major ingredient of the Nehru brand of liberal Indian nationalism.

The claims embodied in the principle of self-determination are made all the more explosive by the external dimensions of ethnic strife. Where cultural affinities transcend the domestic arena and serve as poles of attraction for the intervention of outside forces, or as a pretext for retaliation against minorities in neighbouring states, successful conflict resolution becomes very difficult indeed. Domestic conflict inevitably triggers inter-state ethnic conflict; each feeds on the other, thus generating a nightmarish sequence of interlocking violence.

To recognize the primacy of ethnic particularity is to acknowledge the rights of minorities. In looking for ways of protecting these rights we need to rethink the responsibilities of the international community. As has now become dramatically clear, the threats posed to minorities through the "excesses of self-determination" carry implications that go far beyond the boundaries of existing state systems. The massive exodus of refugee populations into neighbouring areas imperils their political stability, generates fresh outbursts of xenophobic violence and imposes insuperable burdens on their economies. Although the tasks ahead are daunting, the time has come to invest the United Nations security system with a new mandate, one that would not simply reaffirm the rights of minorities but stipulate the rules and criteria under which the use of force can be internationally sanctioned and brought into effect. ■

The funeral of a victim of violence in south Ossetia (1991).

RENÉ LEMARCHAND,
a Franco-American university teacher, is professor of political science at the University of Florida. He is the author of several books on Africa, including *Rwanda and Burundi* (Pall Mall Press, London, 1970) and *Qadhafi's Policies in Africa* (Indiana University Press, 1990).

How far is the integration of Europe's immigrant workers really possible?

GUESTS, IMMIGRANTS, MINORITIES

by Riva Kastoryano

Turkish immigrants play chess in Rome (1990).

THE modern nation-state, which is based on a universalist ideology, invented the concept of citizenship so as to include all people, irrespective of the communities to which they belong, as individuals with equal rights. But the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of modern societies has persisted, to the point where the notion of minorities has re-emerged.

The term minority refers to a community which organizes itself around an identity that is different from that of society as a whole, which expresses that difference publicly and demands to be recognized for what it is. Such minorities may be religious, national or ethnic. National minorities demand recognition of a territory of their own within the nation-state. Regional minorities put forward certain specific claims arising out of their geographical location.

Ethnic minorities are more difficult to define precisely, since they encompass the twin concepts of cultural community and social class. In the United States, for example, in spite of the cultural diversity on which the nation is based, people disadvantaged not only by their ethnic, racial, national or religious origin, but also by social class, are designated as minorities.

In Europe, the large-scale immigration that has taken place since the 1960s has created similar situations. Yet in contrast to the practice in the United States, immigrant populations in Europe are not defined as minorities, but as *immigrés* ("immigrants") in France and as *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers") in Germany and Switzerland.

An anti-racist demonstration in Paris (1990).

RIVA KASTORYANO, of France, is currently carrying out research at the Centre for International Studies and Research, Paris, on the expression of identities and community action among migrants in Europe. Among her publications are *Etre turc en France: Réflexions sur familles et communauté* (L'Harmattan publishers, Paris, 1986) and "Integration and expression of collective identities of migrants in France and Germany", a study which appeared in the Journal of Ethnic Studies (1992).

Behind these differences in terminology, which reflect the influence of national thinking on the subject, a convergence between European immigration and integration policies can be seen.

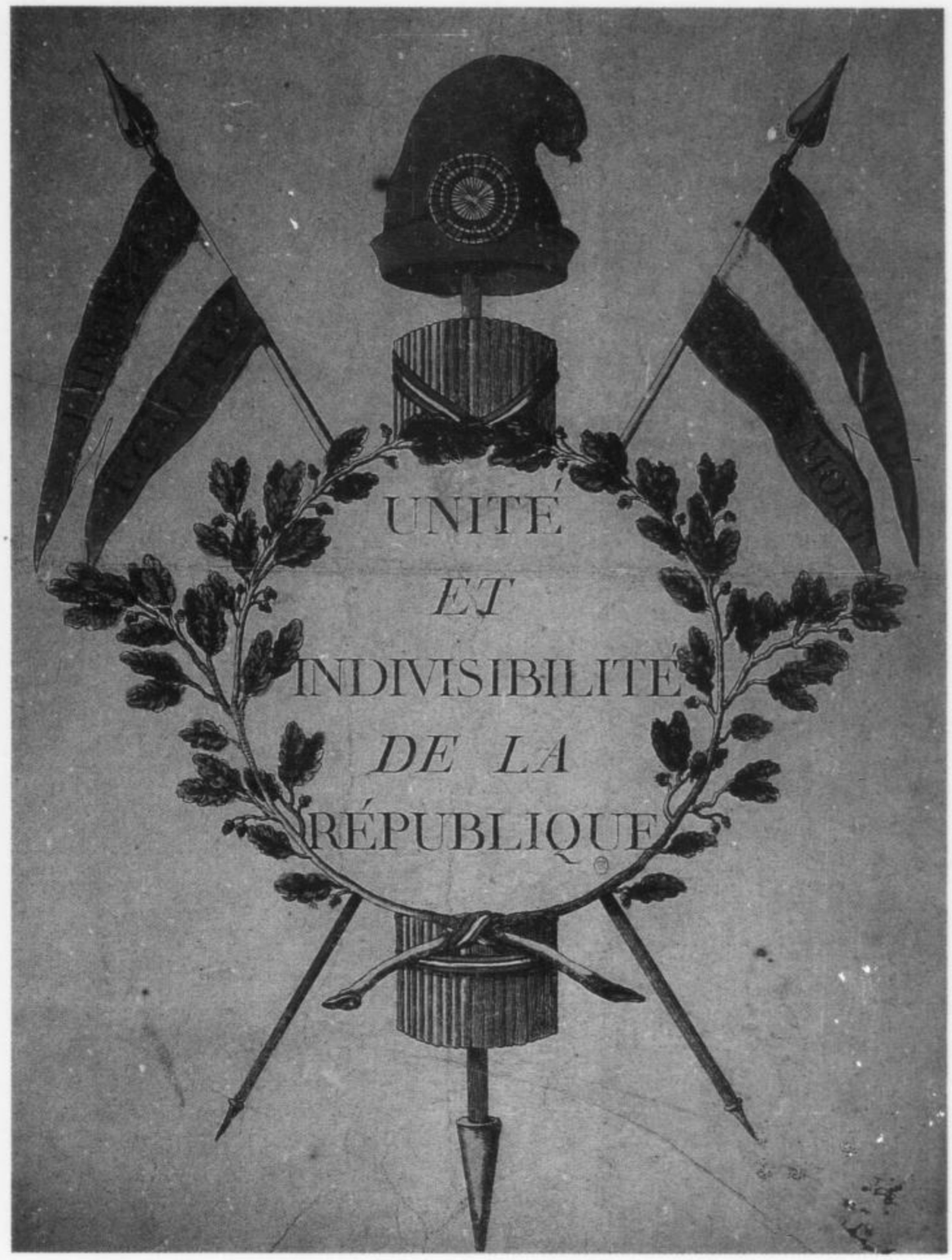
Immigration in Europe grew out of efforts to promote economic reconstruction after years of war and stagnation. Some states, such as Germany, signed bilateral agreements with countries of the Mediterranean basin. Others, such as France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, opened their doors to the peoples of their former colonies. Some, such as Germany, laid down a specific policy on immigration. Others, such as France and the United Kingdom, implicitly acknowledged that foreign workers were there to stay for some time. The immigrant workers themselves saw their situation as an opportunity to move up the social ladder back in their home countries. This economically-driven immigration movement was thus seen by both sides as a temporary expedient.

Today the fact that the immigrants and their families have settled permanently is paralleled by forms of integration that vary from group to group and from country to country. The ways in which immigrant communities set about organizing themselves are strongly influenced by the historical, economic, cultural and political links between their countries of origin and the host countries. Even so, a common pattern of activity can be discerned. In every country, immigrants mobilize in a bid to achieve equal rights to jobs and housing; they fight discrimination; they react against racism; and they seek to obtain some form of political representation that will bring them respect and recognition.

SHARED LOYALTIES

Demands for a say in political matters are voiced through a variety of associations. Since the 1980s, almost every European nation has seen the rapid spread of associations of this type catering specifically for the children of immigrants. The networks they form, which are based on shared national and religious loyalties, become channels for a mutual aid system providing, among other things, basic legal information on such matters as entry and residence rights and formalities, employment and housing.

In France, for example, once an immigrant worker has settled in the country and so has legal



A poster from the time of the French Revolution (1792).

status, the associations promote his or her integration into society through language and literacy courses for adults and education and training programmes for the young. They also organize debates, concerts and other types of performance to increase public awareness of the group's indigenous culture and to make people more responsive to their particular situation.

These associations depend for their survival largely on government grants to the main sectors involved in the integration process, such as employment, housing and community life. In its support for socio-cultural activities, the government encourages community events such as the celebration of national holidays. Governments regard the right granted to foreigners, as a legally recognized category, to form associations as being primarily aimed at encouraging civic equality. However, some researchers see this support as a deliberate policy to perpetuate the minority status of immigrants, since in their view the authorities are intent on controlling the types of organization created, on steering the immigrant population in a given direction, and, if necessary, mobilizing it for that purpose.

Through the associations, the immigrants' sense of identity is strengthened and they are all the more eager to win recognition for their distinctive features. They also establish new ties in which economic, social and political interests go hand in hand with the desire to assert their identity, a desire that prompts them to negotiate with the authorities and the machinery of the state. Even in a political context in which citizenship is seen as the only path to integration, this approach is two-edged, insofar as it establishes a *de facto* minority status.

In the debate on immigration in France, the term "minority" is never used, since the French state has traditionally regarded itself as universalist and secular. In Germany the word has a very different connotation. The idea of the German nation, founded on a community of culture, language and even blood, rules out all cultural differences. Since, by their very nature, they cannot belong to a nation defined in these terms, the *Gastarbeiter*—also referred to as *Ausländer* ("foreigners") or as *ausländische Mitbürger* ("foreign fellow-citizens")—claim minority status and demand a policy on minorities that will secure their political recognition.

The Netherlands is the only European country that expressly refers to "minorities", although they are still not defined as a legal category. Minorities have been officially described as "caravan-dwellers and legal residents such as Indians, Surinamese, Gypsies, refugees and migrants". In order to create conditions conducive to their emancipation, the formation of groups on a national or religious basis is encouraged. These are assured of playing an active part in social and political life as pressure groups.

In the United Kingdom, according to John Rex, the immigrant communities are not simply ethnic groups seeking to preserve their cultural identity and negotiate their status as minorities with society as a whole. They are more ambitious in that they seek to work in conjunction with the nation's institutions in order to win the support of majority opinion.

The prospect of a united Europe reopens the whole issue of the integration strategies of the various countries. Fresh scope for negotiation, extending further than the framework of the nation-state, is emerging for all national and religious communities. In years to come, minority status will have to be based on a multicultural conception of citizenship. In a society that has raised the banner of multiculturalism on the institutional, national, regional and even religious levels, the assertion of minority identity will come to seem the only real course of action. ■

A SENSE OF DIFFERENCE

by Yves Plasseraud

A thumbnail guide to the world's minorities

WHAT are the usual criteria by which a minority group can be identified? In the case of ethnic or cultural minorities, the first criterion is that of language. A group using a language different from that of the majority in the midst of which its members live, like the Armenian community in exile or the Jews in nineteenth-century Russia, is clearly a minority. The same applies to peoples such as the Kurds in Iran or the Welsh in the United Kingdom, who live in a specific region of a state and speak a different language from that of the state.

The linguistic criterion is far from conclusive, however. A variety of identity "tags", such as religion, or cultural factors such as tradition, can also help to give people a sense of identity as members of a minority.

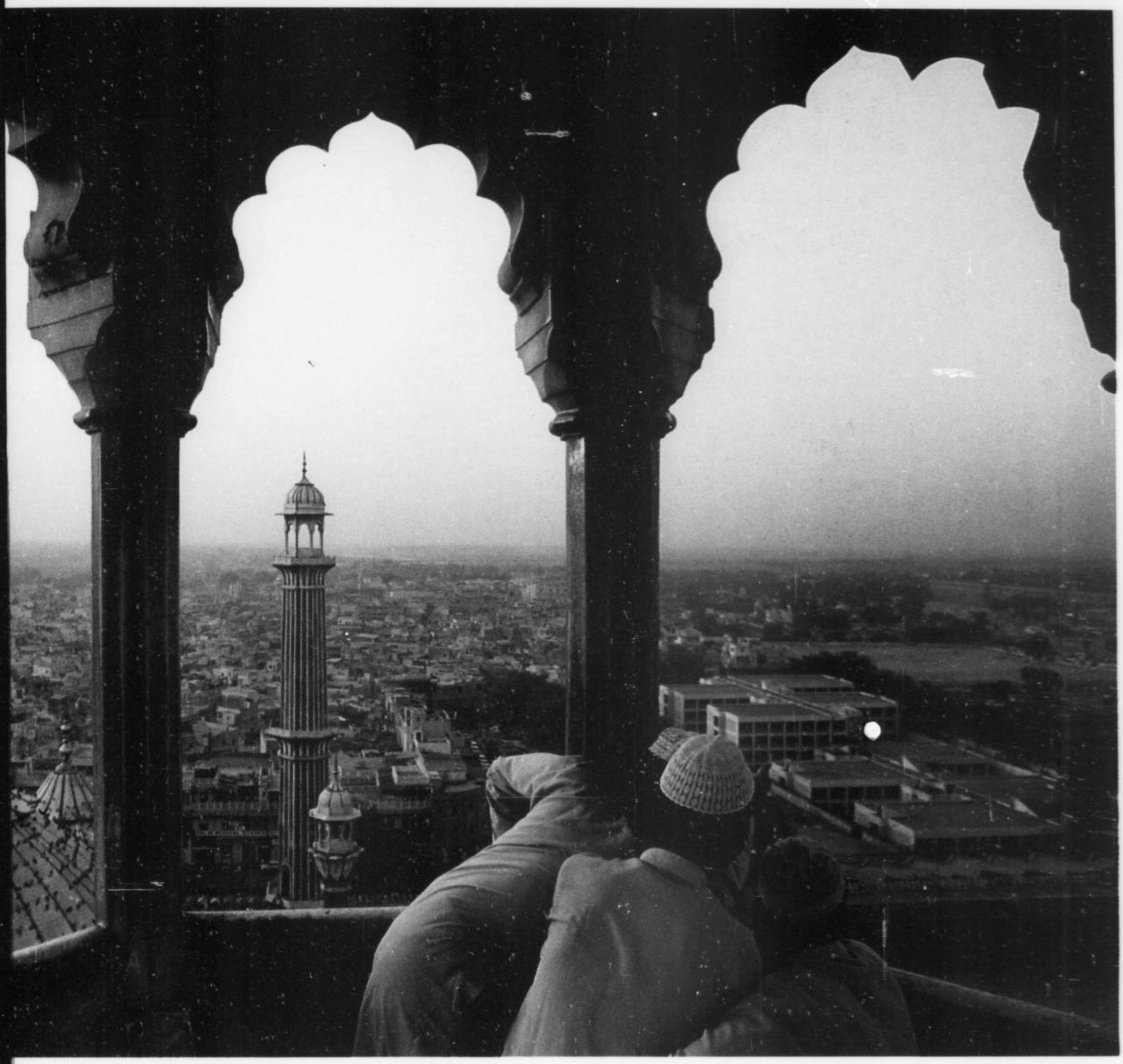
We shall therefore adopt a definition that is more subjective than objective and say that a group constitutes a minority when it feels from experience that it is in a minority in relation to the environment in which it lives. Account must therefore be taken of its culture, language, traditions or religion.

Young aborigines at play in Alice Springs (Australia).

RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

The first and probably most obvious category of minority is that based on religious affiliation. This is more than just a statistical phenomenon. The fact that there may be more Protestants than Catholics in, say, Germany or the United States does not mean that the Catholics can be said to be a minority. For a religious group to be in a minority situation, this situation must be conspicuous enough for it to give rise to a sense of vulnerability or even inferiority. By this criterion, the Bahais of Iran, the Copts of Egypt and the Mennonites of Russia are minorities. The same criterion has applied for some years now to the Muslims in India and the Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

So-called "cultural" minorities constitute



another important category, although one that is mentioned less often and is sometimes questioned. Their "difference" is not, strictly speaking, one of language or religion. One such case is that of the Jews who in some countries speak different languages from most of the population, even though some of these languages, such as Ladino or Yiddish, could be described as "ethnic languages". Here, religious affiliation often only represents a symbolic form of loyalty to an identity that has a number of other defining features, such as dietary practices, humour and a long tradition of persecution. A similar situation is found among the Gypsies, who show an awareness of their identity that goes beyond differences of language and religion.

When we come to the third category—the ethnic or national minorities which account for by far the largest number of minority situations—we enter a problem area in which a distinction has to be made between several sub-categories.

The first of these sub-categories is that of aboriginal or tribal populations who live outside the mainstream of present-day society and continue to practise their ancestral customs. These groups, which are often almost on the verge of extinction because their way of life is out of step with the modern world, include ethnic groups as different as the Pygmies of Cameroon, the Aborigines of Australia, the Miao of central Vietnam or the Indians of the Mato Grosso in Brazil. Their situation is in many respects different from that of the other groups. They are specifically considered as "indigenous peoples" by the United Nations.

Another sub-category consists of those peoples who are widely scattered and who, although speaking a common language, do not have a country of origin or attachment. This is the case

The view from the Principal Mosque in Delhi (India).

YVES PLASSERAUD,
a French lawyer, is Secretary-General of the Minority Rights Group (MRG), a humanitarian organization founded in 1970. He is the author of many articles and several books, including *Les nouvelles démocraties d'Europe centrale* (Paris, 1991) and *Les Etats baltes* (Paris, 1992).

of the Assyro-Chaldeans, or Assyrians, in the Middle East and of the Vlachs in Europe. These peoples, which tend not to be numerous, are particularly vulnerable.

There are also the relatively rare cases of what might be termed "majority" minorities, peoples which comprise the majority of the population in terms of numbers but are relegated to *de facto* "minority" status in the country in which they live. Among these peoples are the Quechua Indians of Ecuador and the Blacks of South Africa.

Another category is that of the "territorial" minorities, which have traditionally occupied a specific area which they regard as their "ethnic" or "national" territory. Members of this category include the Berbers, the Kurds, the Catalans, the German-speakers of the South Tyrol, and the Maris (people of Finno-Ugric stock living in the Urals), all of whom have long occupied regions which they regard as their "homeland", to which they are bound by collective memories that form the bedrock of their "systems of symbols".

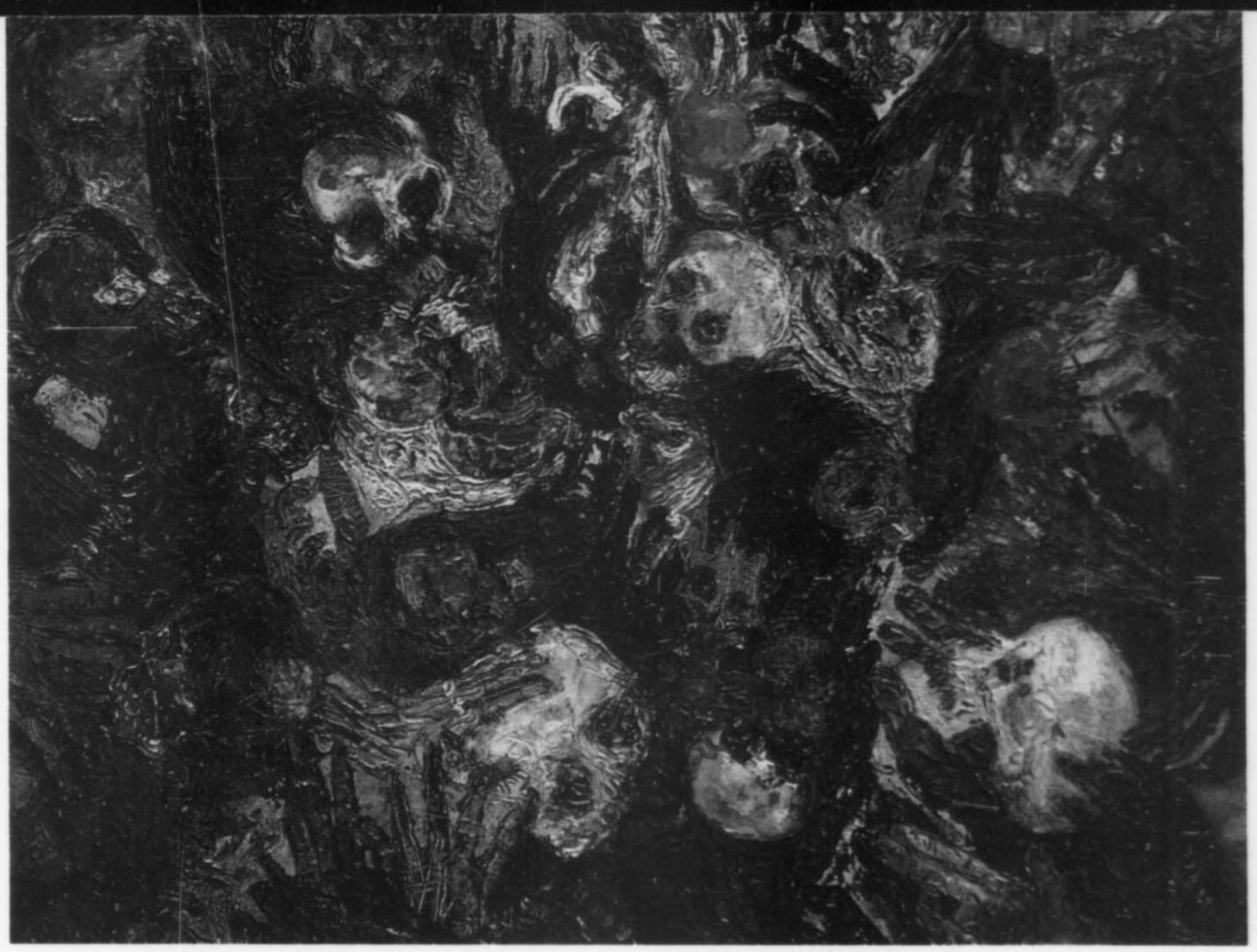
In many cases, they owe their situation as minorities to border changes, particularly as a result of the creation of new states. These changes suddenly put them on the other side of a border, along with other minority peoples from different ethnic groups. The partition of Czechoslovakia in 1993, which has left some Slovaks in "Czechia" and some Czechs in Slovakia, is one such problem area. These "contingent minorities", as they are sometimes called, can be contrasted with other minorities whose status might be said to be their "essence". The latter traditionally regard themselves as minorities and belong to two types, "colonies" deliberately settled by a ruling power for military or economic purposes, and "landless nations" like the Gypsies.

The sense of identity varies significantly between different groups, regardless of their size. The factors that determine the extent of a people's resistance to assimilation are still not fully understood. Our own time, when "progress" and "consumerist" standardization are undermining identities and differences almost everywhere, also happens to coincide with a juncture when those identities and differences are being strongly asserted. When peoples are sucked into processes of levelling down and standardization, they seem to generate "differentiating antibodies" that intensify their sense of identity and prompt them to seek greater autonomy.

Whatever the cause and significance of this paradox may be, it is certain that people cannot be robbed with impunity of the stabilizing and comforting ethos of an identity fully accepted and expressed. To uproot people and repress their identity is to breed anxiety among them and destroy their sense of community. The choice today may lie between urban riots and Sarajevo-type situations on the one hand and on the other the harmonious and unfettered development of identities from which all features incompatible with the dignity of the human person have been banished. ■

Gypsies on the move in Romania.

The origins of the Yugoslav state help to explain its eventual break-up



THE YUGOSLAV QUAGMIRE

by Paul Garde

Above,
***It is not macabre* (1993), oil on canvas by the British artist Clare Avery, inspired by the war in Bosnia.**

THERE are no minorities in *multinational states* such as the Switzerland and Belgium of today, the Soviet Union of yesterday, and the Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia of earlier times. In such cases state and nation do not necessarily coincide. The existence of several nations within the state is taken for granted. No distinction is made between majority and minorities.

Nor do minorities exist in the *state-based nation-state*, in which the state is formed *before* the emergence of the nation, which takes shape within that pre-established mould. The two entities thus automatically coincide. This is true of the oldest states of Western Europe, such as France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal, and also of the United States. The various ethnic minorities which live in states of this kind—Bretons or Scots for example—feel that they belong not only to the state but also to the nation—French or British as the case may be.

A national minority can only exist in a *nation-based nation-state*, in which the state is formed *after* the nation becomes conscious of its existence and with the avowed aim of modelling itself *a posteriori* on an *already* existing nation. Since the frontiers of the two entities never entirely coincide, there are bound to be national minorities. This is the situation throughout central Europe, from Italy to Estonia, from Germany to Greece.

The creation of states of this type was one of the great ambitions of the victors of the First World War, and this is why the peace treaties of 1919 and the League of Nations drew up a body of legislation on national minorities. The members of these minorities were to have the same *individual* rights as other citizens and thus be protected against any discriminatory measures. They could also demand the recognition of *collective* rights concerning the use of their language, education and the protection of their culture. But the instruments adopted between the wars did not provide for them to be granted a third possible type of freedom: that of *territorial autonomy.*

These rights were poorly implemented in the 1920s and were later systematically flouted by fascist regimes. They were ignored altogether under communism. Today they are back on the agenda.

THE LAND OF THE SOUTHERN SLAVS

In this respect the example of the Yugoslav or southern Slav territory has been unique in this century. What were the key stages in the formation of this area?

Before 1914, the kingdom of Serbia was the quintessence of the nation-based nation-state. It was homogeneous until 1912 because the non-Serbian (Turkish and Albanian) elements had been expelled during the previous century. It took in Albanian, Macedonian, Turkish and other minorities during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) but without recognizing that they had any rights.

Between 1914 and 1941, having in the meantime become Yugoslavia, the kingdom doubled in area. Its subjects now included Croats, Slovenes,

PAUL GARDE,
a French linguist and specialist in Slavonic studies, is a professor emeritus of the University of Provence who previously taught at Yale, Columbia and Geneva Universities. He has written extensively on comparative Slavonic linguistics, the Russian language and Russian literature, and the languages and cultures of the southern Slavs. His most recent work is *Vie et mort de la Yougoslavie* (Paris, 1992).

Muslim Bosnians, Germans and Hungarians, among others. And yet officially it remained a nation-state thanks to the fiction of the "Yugoslav nation" subdivided into three "tribes" (*pleme*): Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the other Yugoslav nations did not count). Thus the state, in which the Serbs were numerically preponderant (comprising some 40 per cent of the population), was supposed to consist of a "Yugoslav" majority (some 85 per cent) and non-Slav minorities.

Between 1945 and 1991, Tito's Yugoslavia abandoned the fiction of the "Yugoslav nation", which the horrors of the Second World War had brought to a bloody end, and officially became a multinational state, recognizing six southern Slav peoples as distinct nations: the Serbs, the Croats, the Slovenes, the Macedonians, the Montenegrins and somewhat later the "Muslims" (Bosnians). The unitary kingdom became a federal republic. The Yugoslav communists thus followed the example set a quarter of a century earlier by the Soviets, who had transformed the Russian empire, dominated by a single nation, into a multinational federation, the USSR.

But Stalin had drawn the logical—or at least terminological—conclusions from this change. The Russian communists had championed the rights of the various non-Russian peoples of the empire, designated by the term "national minority" (*natsmen*). In the USSR, majority and minorities officially ceased to exist; there were only large or small nations, all theoretically equal.

In Yugoslavia on the other hand, in spite of the transition to a multinational state, the hierarchy between "nation" (*narod*) and "minority" (*manjina*) was maintained. The former term was used to designate the six southern Slav nations, while the latter referred to the other non-southern-Slav peoples, such as the Albanians, the Hungarians, the Gypsies and the Turks. In 1963 the term "minority", which was felt to be pejorative, was replaced by that of "nationality" (*narodnost*), but the same ranking order continued to exist. Official language referred to "nations and nationalities", but a term encompassing the two was never invented. The logic of the multinational state was not fully applied: some peoples were more equal than others.

This hierarchy of peoples was paralleled by a hierarchy of territories. The federation comprised six republics; in other words there were as many republics as there were "nations". Each nation was thus "constitutive" of at least one republic. Attached to the republic of Serbia, however, there were also "autonomous provinces", corresponding to the existence of "minorities". These were Kosovo, where there was an Albanian "minority" (*sic*) which accounted for 68 per cent of the population in 1948 (90 per cent today), and Vojvodina, where non-Serbs totalled 49 per cent of the population in 1948 (43 per cent today).

The history of the federation was marked from start to finish by hesitations over the status of the autonomous provinces, especially Kosovo. The provinces enjoyed very limited autonomy at the outset, but this grew until in the last constitution adopted under Tito, that of 1974, it almost

PASSOVER IN SARAJEVO

by Léon Davico

Sarajevo: 7 April this year.

The place: the old synagogue, miraculously still standing, although its windows are shattered.

The time: 12:30 p.m.

The weather is fine. There is relatively little shooting. The little street, usually empty, is full of onlookers, policemen and armed soldiers. Everyone is waiting for President Izetbegovic.

Inside the synagogue there is an unusual bustle of activity. Pesach—Passover—is being celebrated for the 500th time since the first Sephardic Jews arrived here in search of a quiet spot where they could take refuge from the Inquisition.

Quieter spots than this could be imagined.

At the same moment, a few blocks away, at the Academy of Sciences, a symposium on the damage suffered by the city during a year's shelling is about to open.

For some reason, there is no shelling today. There is the usual machine-gun and automatic rifle fire, but people hardly notice it any more.

A hundred-odd townspeople, Jews and non-Jews, are packed into the little room on the left of the main entrance. The table has been carefully laid by the women and girls. In front of each guest is an egg, dark brown from being boiled for hours with onion peelings. Where have they managed to find the onions? And the eggs?

"Eggs were cheaper at the market yesterday. Two dollars each," the secretary tells me. "We shall read the Haggadah, the Passover service—there is a famous copy printed in Sarajevo, but it is well protected and we shan't touch it."

The President arrives, sombre and thoughtful. He has just refused to send General Halilovic to a meeting with the Serb and Croat generals chaired by Generals Wahlgren and Morillon at Sarajevo airport. Fighting continues at Srebenica, and until there is a cease-fire around this town in eastern Bosnia, he does not wish to negotiate.

Surrounded by bodyguards, he enters the synagogue, followed by members of the government. Two minutes later the Rei ul Ulema, the religious leader of all the Muslims of former Yugoslavia, arrives, at almost the same moment as the Catholic archbishop, Monsignor Puljic, and the former leader of the Orthodox community, whose replacement has not yet reached Sarajevo because of the war. They take their places around the table and listen to Ivica Ceresnjes, president of the city's Jewish community. They know each other well; their communities have lived together for five centuries.

Bosnian Muslims executed at the entry to their village.

equalled that of the republics, before being brutally suppressed in 1989-1990.

In 1991 the federation broke up into five states, one remaining multinational (Bosnia) and the other four being nation-states (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro, Macedonia). With the exception of Slovenia (which is virtually homogeneous), these states contain minorities. The largest of these (each comprising over 300,000 persons) are the Serb minority in Croatia, the Albanian and Hungarian minority in Serbia-Montenegro, and the Albanian minority in Macedonia. Bosnia, by virtue of its constitution, is the common territory of three peoples: Muslims (44 per cent), Serbs (31 per cent) and Croats (17 per cent).

THE STEAMROLLER OF HIERARCHY

But the consequences of the hierarchy established in Tito's time between "nations" and "minorities" can still be felt. Everything suggests that the Serbs regarded the status of "nation"

Fifty years ago, between 1941 and 1945, the harmony was interrupted. Tens of thousands of Bosnians were killed during a terrible war. Nine-tenths of the Jewish population were annihilated, and the rest hid in the homes of their Muslim, Serb and Croat friends. Then, with the return of peace, the survivors came back to Sarajevo to take up again the life of their community, shattered by foreign aggression.

Aware of their unique situation, the Jews of Sarajevo have always been extremely cosmopolitan. One marriage in three was a mixed marriage. When misfortune again struck the people of this Olympic city on 7 April last year, the Jewish community numbered 5,000—1,000 Jews and 4,000 Muslims, Serbs and Croats, wives and husbands, cousins, uncles and aunts, or simply friends affiliated to the community. About a thousand children and old people have left the city to escape death, but the other 4,000 have remained and form one of the world's most tightly-knit groups. They are now virtually inseparable. Each day they come to the synagogue for a meal, one after the other. Opposite, in the pharmacy which belongs to the community, medicines from abroad are dispensed to the people of Sarajevo free of charge. All they have to do is show a medical prescription.

His prayer shawl over his shoulders, Ceresnjes speaks of tolerance, friendship and peace. People listen gravely, making no attempt to hide their tears. Outside, close by, death lies in wait, ethnic cleansing is going on, a sermon of hate, not love, is being preached. The guests eat their eggs—two dollars is a small investment for a friendly meal—and unleavened bread, as the matzo wafers have somehow got lost between New York and the little street in Sarajevo. Speaker follows speaker; each one talks of peace, but seemingly without great conviction. They want peace but don't quite know how to achieve it or whether it can be achieved. They want the madness to stop and multi-ethnic families to be able to continue their lives without fear. No one talks of happiness. That will have to wait.

Meanwhile, a candle is lit. The flame is small but it has vast significance. It is the flame of tolerance, the flame of survival.

The ceremony is over. People shake hands, embrace. They go back to the cellars. Take care at the intersections—even if there is no shelling, there are always the snipers. Where there are trees there is danger, so move quickly. If they were not dangerous places, people would have chopped the trees down long ago for firewood. But now spring is here and perhaps there will be no need for wood and fire.

The little flame burns on, a last flame of hope that soon this nightmare will be over and these Jews and Muslims, Serbs and Croats of Sarajevo will be able to live a new life together.

Will they be given this last chance? ■

LÉON DAVICO,
a Belgrade-born French journalist, is Paris correspondent of the independent political weekly *Vreme* (Belgrade). Director of UNESCO's Office of Public Information from 1976 to 1980 and from 1987 to 1989, he worked in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees between 1980 and 1987. He is currently engaged in humanitarian activities in the former Yugoslavia.

for themselves and that of "minority" for others as a privilege to be enjoyed in perpetuity.

Their refusal to be a "minority" in Croatia led to the outbreak of war against that country in the summer of 1991 and to the setting-up of a seat of Serb power ("the Serb Republic of Krajina") on at least one-quarter of Croat territory, as well as to the expulsion of non-Serbs, representing about half the population (200,000 to 300,000 persons).

In Bosnia, where there is no majority nation and where their status as a "constitutive people" is not disputed, the Serbs are afraid of being in the minority (in the Parliamentary meaning of the term) in face of a possible coalition of the other two peoples, and also reject the independent Bosnian state. This led to the war which they unleashed in April 1992 in a bid to hive off and create an ethnically pure "Serb Republic" in Bosnia, covering two-thirds of the land area. The outcome so far has been to create two million refugees.

In Serbia on the other hand, the authorities proclaim the rights of the "majority" vis-à-vis the "minorities", and consequently the territorial autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, provinces peopled by "minorities", has been suppressed. Outside Serbia the rights of Serb minorities are being defended to the point of secession, while within Serbia itself the rights of non-Serb minorities are being whittled away to zero, if necessary by forcible expulsion; in other words, the object is to change the frontiers of Serbia wherever the latter leave Serbs outside, but to preserve them intact in cases where they include non-Serbs.

What aim can the international community set itself in view of this strategy? The preservation of existing frontiers is an absolute principle for want of which the whole of Europe would again be plunged into the nightmare of wars of conquest. It must be saved from such a fate On the other hand, the *nation-based nation-state* is a very potent aspiration in this part of the world, and one that it would be vain to oppose. In other words there are bound to be minorities and they will have to be protected.

The only valid aim would be to adopt an international law on minorities that would guarantee individual and collective rights to each and every one of them, but not necessarily the right to territorial autonomy, which only shifts the problem by creating a minority within a minority. There should be a long-term commitment on the part of the United Nations to make sure that this law is respected on the ground: This regime should be applied wherever the problem arises, not only where conflicts have already erupted. Bosnia is the only existing multinational state in central Europe, and should be protected as such. Here too, the United Nations should make a long-term commitment through some form of mandate arrangement.

Some might say that this is a utopian view. It is true that the forces opposing such a solution currently have the upper hand. But if action is undertaken, there is no other aim it can pursue. The only alternatives are expulsions, "ethnic cleansing" and wars everywhere. ■

A football field serves as a cemetery in Sarajevo (Bosnia).

LIST OF SALES AND SUBSCRIPTION AGENTS

Subscriptions can be paid to the subscription agent in your country who will supply rates in local currency on request

ARGENTINA	Edilyr Srl, Librería Correo de la UNESCO, Tucumán 1685,1050 Buenos Aires.
AUSTRALIA	Dominie Pty Ltd Subscription Services, PO Box 33, Brookvale NSW 2100.
AUSTRIA	Gerold & Co. Import & Export, Zeitschriften/Periodicals, Graben 31, 1011 Vienna.
BELGIUM	Monsieur Jean De Lannoy, 202 av du Roi, 1060 Brussels.
BRAZIL	Fundacão Getulio Vargas, Editora Divisão de Vendas, Praia de Botafogo No 1888, 20000 Rio de Janeiro RJ.
CANADA	Renouf Publishing Company Ltd., Central Distribution Centre, 1294 Algoma Road, Ottawa, Ont. K1B 3W8. Périodica Inc, 1155 Av. Ducharme, Outremont PQ H2V 1E2.
CHILE	Editorial Universitaria SA, Maria Luisa Santander 0447, Santiago.
CHINA	China National Publications Import & Export Corp., PO Box 88, Beijing.
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	Artia, Ve Smeckach 30, 111 27 Prague 1.
DENMARK	Munksgaard, Norre Sogade 35, 1370 Copenhagen K.
FINLAND	Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, PO Box 334, 00131 Helsinki. Suomalainen Kirjakauppa Oy, PO Box 2, 01641 Vantas 64.
GERMANY	Deutscher UNESCO Kurier Vertrieb, Basaltstrasse 57, 5300 Bonn 3. Uno Verlag, Poppelsdorfer Allée 55, 5300 Bonn.
GREECE	Librairie Kauffmann SA, Stadiou 28, 105 64 Athens.
GUATEMALA	Comisión Guatemalteca de Cooperación Con la UNESCO, 3A Avenida 10 29 Zona 1, Apartado Postal 2630, Ciudad de Guatemala.
HONG KONG	Hong Kong Government Information Services Dept., 1 Battery Path Central, Hong Kong.
HUNGARY	Kultura, Periodicals Import Dept, PO Box 149, 1389 Budapest 62.
INDIA	Orient Longman Ltd (Subscriptions Account), Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400 038. Oxford Book & Stationery Co, Code No. D 8208052, Scindia House, New Delhi 110 001.
ISRAEL	Literary Transactions, Inc c/o Steimatsky Ltd. PO Box 1444, Bneibrak 51114.

ITALY	Libreria Comm Sansoni S P A Licosa, Via Benedetto Fortini 120/10 (Ang via Chiantigiana), 50125 Florence.
JAPAN	Eastern Book Service Inc., Periodicals Account, 373 Hongo 3 Chome, Bunkyo Ku, Tokyo 113.
KOREA	The Korean National Commission for UNESCO, PO Box Central 64, Seoul.
LUXEMBOURG	Messageries Paul Kraus, 11 rue Christophe Plantin, 2339 Luxembourg.
MALTA	Sapienzas, 26 Republic Street, Valetta.
MAURITIUS	Nalanda Co. Ltd, 30 Bourbon Street, Port Louis.
MEXICO	Librería el Correo de la UNESCO SA, Col Roma, Guanajuanto 72, Deleg Cuauhtemoc, 06700 Mexico City DF.
MOROCCO	Editions La Porte, Librairie aux Belles Images, 281 av Mohamed V, Rabat.
NETHERLANDS	Faxon Europe, PO Box 197, 1000 AD Amsterdam.
NEW ZEALAND	GP Publications Limited, PO Box 38900, Petone, Wellington.
NORWAY	Narvesen Info Center, Box 6125 Etterstad, 0602 Oslo 6.
PORTUGAL	Livraria Portugal (Dias & Andrade Lda), Rua do Carmo 70, 1200 Lisbon.
RUSSIA	Mezhdunarodnaja Kniga, U1 Dimitrova 39, Moscow 113095.
SOUTH AFRICA	Universitas Books Pty Ltd, PO Box 775, Pretoria 0001.
SPAIN	Ediciones Liber, Apartado 17, Ondarroa (Vizcaya). Mundi-Prensa Libros SA, Castello 37, 28001 Madrid.
SRI LANKA	Lake House Bookshop, 100 Chittampalam, Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 2.
SWEDEN	Wennergren Williams AB, Box 30004, S 104 25 Stockholm.
SWITZERLAND	Naville SA, 7 rue Lévrier, 1201 Geneva - Europa Verlag, Ramistrasse 5, 8024 Zurich.
THAILAND	Suksapan Panit, Mansion 9, Rajadamnern Avenue, Bangkok 2.
TUNISIA	Société Tunisienne de Diffusion, 5 av de Carthage, Tunis.
UNITED KINGDOM	H M Stationery Office, Agency Sec Publications Ctr, 51 Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5DR.
UNITED STATES	Bernan-Unipub, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706 4391.
URUGUAY	Ediciones Trecho SA Cuento Periodicos, Maldonado 1090, Montevideo.
VENEZUELA	UNESCO Cresalc, Apartado Postal 68394, Altamira, Caracas 1062 A.

WHY?

by Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat

No longer can anyone plead ignorance of what is going on in Bosnia today or of what is at stake there. No longer can anyone maintain that there is nothing to choose between the lawful representatives of the sovereign state of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the massed forces of "ethnic cleansing" that are near to having destroyed it.

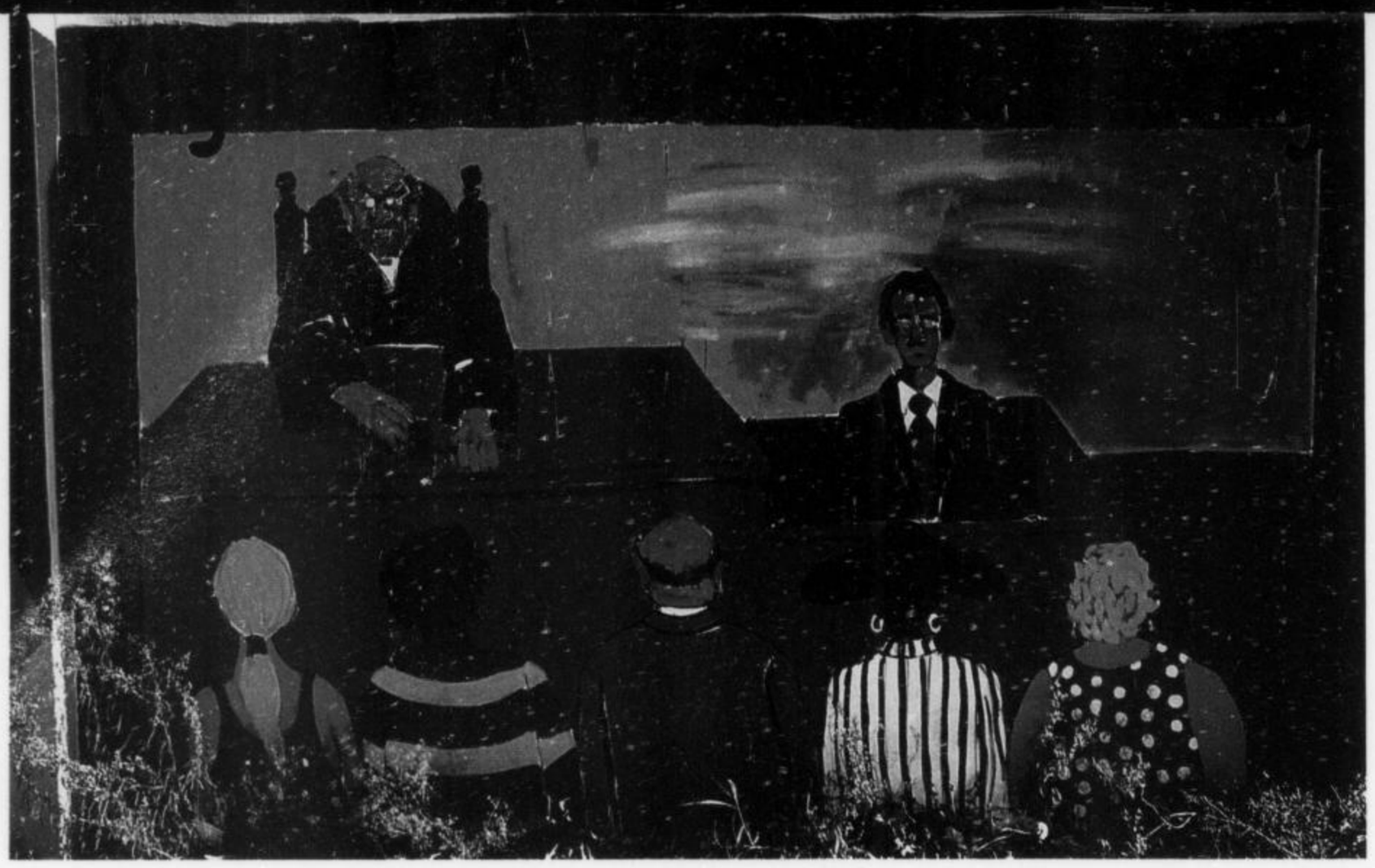
The international media have seen to that: the press and, more especially, radio and television show us day in and day out how the tide of horror is inexorably rising, detailing the plight of the refugees, the concentration camps, the murders of children and the mass rapes; writers and artists of all political persuasions are becoming personally involved; and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council are becoming increasingly urgent.

Everyone has now begun to realize that what is happening in Bosnia-Herzegovina is much more than a local conflict between rival communities; it is the clash of two outlooks that exist in all societies the world over: one that is humanist and open, and that opts for pluralist democracy, and, on the other hand, one that yields to the temptation to create a supposedly "pure" ethnic entity by force. Everyone knows—politicians in particular—that there is nothing more contagious, in the long run, than that temptation, and that there is no greater threat to world peace, as the Holocaust of fifty years ago reminds us.

How is it, then, that the irreparable has been allowed to happen? How has it come about that victory seems to have been conceded *de facto* to the ethnic cleansing campaign?

Why, despite the total involvement of the mass media, whose awesome power has recently been brought to bear to alter decisively the course of world events, has nothing been done to prevent a disaster that everyone foresaw and everyone has denounced?

Why? ■



The long struggle to provide international protection for minorities

A PROTECTIVE FRAMEWORK

by Janusz Symonides

INTERNATIONAL regulations concerning the protection of minorities go back to 1555 when, for the first time, the Peace of Augsburg provided for the protection of religious minorities. Later the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the Polish-Russian Conventions of 1767 and 1775 guaranteed rights of dissidents in Poland, while the Vienna Treaty of 1815 gave religious minorities not only freedom of faith but also certain civil rights. Again, relatively far-reaching obligations concerning the protection and equality of all subjects were imposed on Turkey and the Balkan States in 1878 by the Treaty of Berlin.

The struggle of various national and religious minorities to establish their independence in Central and Eastern Europe was a prominent factor in the First World War. Post-war treaties provided for the protection of racial, religious or linguistic minorities in these newly independent states. The League of Nations was to supervise imposed obligations, and violations were subject to action by the League.

The United Nations Secretariat in 1947 took the view that the League of Nations minority system had ceased to exist, and favoured a new, universal and individualistic conception of human rights. United Nations action and standard-setting instruments were at that time dominated by the individualistic concept of non-discrimination and equality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not mention the "protection of minorities", though during the debate proposals in this respect were presented. They were rejected because of a fear that they might create incentives for separatist tendencies and movements. In consequence, the Universal Declaration contains only general clauses prohibiting discrimination.

The concept of protection of persons belonging to minorities—but not that of minorities themselves—was accepted in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which declares: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities should not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language".

Similarly, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960) takes into account the right of persons belonging to minorities: ". . . It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each state, the use or the teaching of their own language".

Among UNESCO Declarations, two are of special importance for the recognition of the collective rights of minorities: the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978) which provides that "All individuals and groups have the right to be different, to consider themselves as different and to be regarded as such", and the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation stipulating that: "1. Each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved. 2. Every people has the right and the duty to develop its culture".

JANUSZ SYMONIDES, an internationally known Polish lawyer, has been Director of UNESCO's Division of Human Rights and Peace since 1989. He is the author of more than 350 publications (including 17 books), on human rights, international control, the law of the sea, the protection of the environment, international security, and the theory of international relations.

The protection of minority rights has been particularly advanced in the European region within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process. The Helsinki Final Act adopted in 1975 proclaimed that: "The participating States on whose territory national minorities exist will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before the law, will afford the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect their legitimate interests in this sphere". This formulation was in line with the concept still prevailing in the 1970s that the elimination of any discrimination, guarantees of equality before the law, and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms satisfy all claims that persons belonging to minorities may present.

The Concluding Document of the Madrid follow-up meeting, adopted in 1983, stressed the importance of constant progress in ensuring the respect for an actual enjoyment of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. A step forward was made during the Vienna follow-up meeting. In a new international atmosphere, at the time of perestroika and the elimination of ideological controversies between East and West, the Vienna Concluding Document, adopted in 1989, imposed on participating states the duty of creating conditions for the promotion of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory.

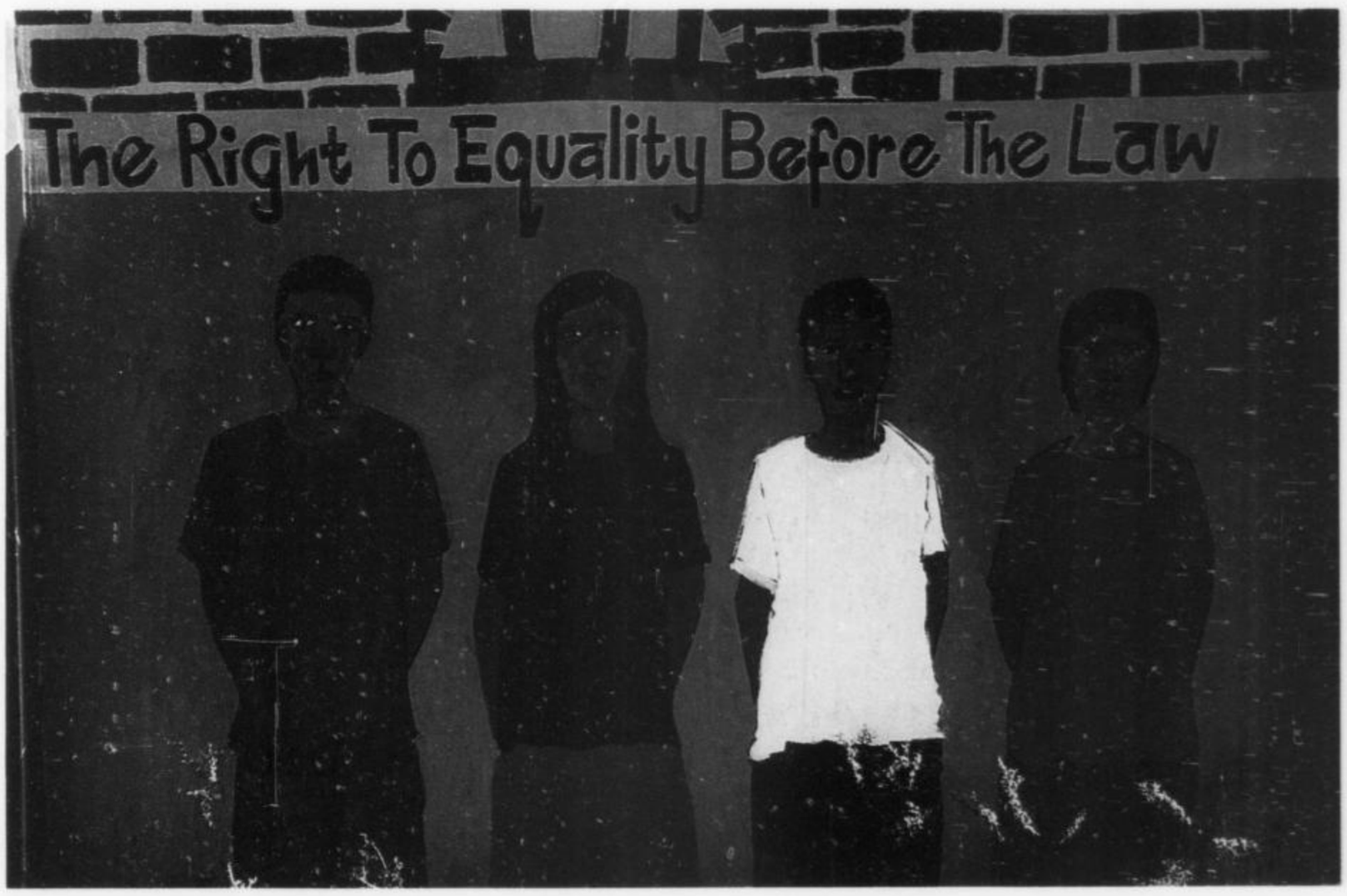
The 1990 Copenhagen meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE assumed that questions concerning national minorities can only be solved within the framework of democratic policies based on the existence of a state of law, effective judicial control of government, pluralism and tolerance.

The Charter of Paris adopted by the CSCE Summit Meeting on 21 November 1990 confirmed that the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities should be protected and conditions for the promotion of that identity should be created.

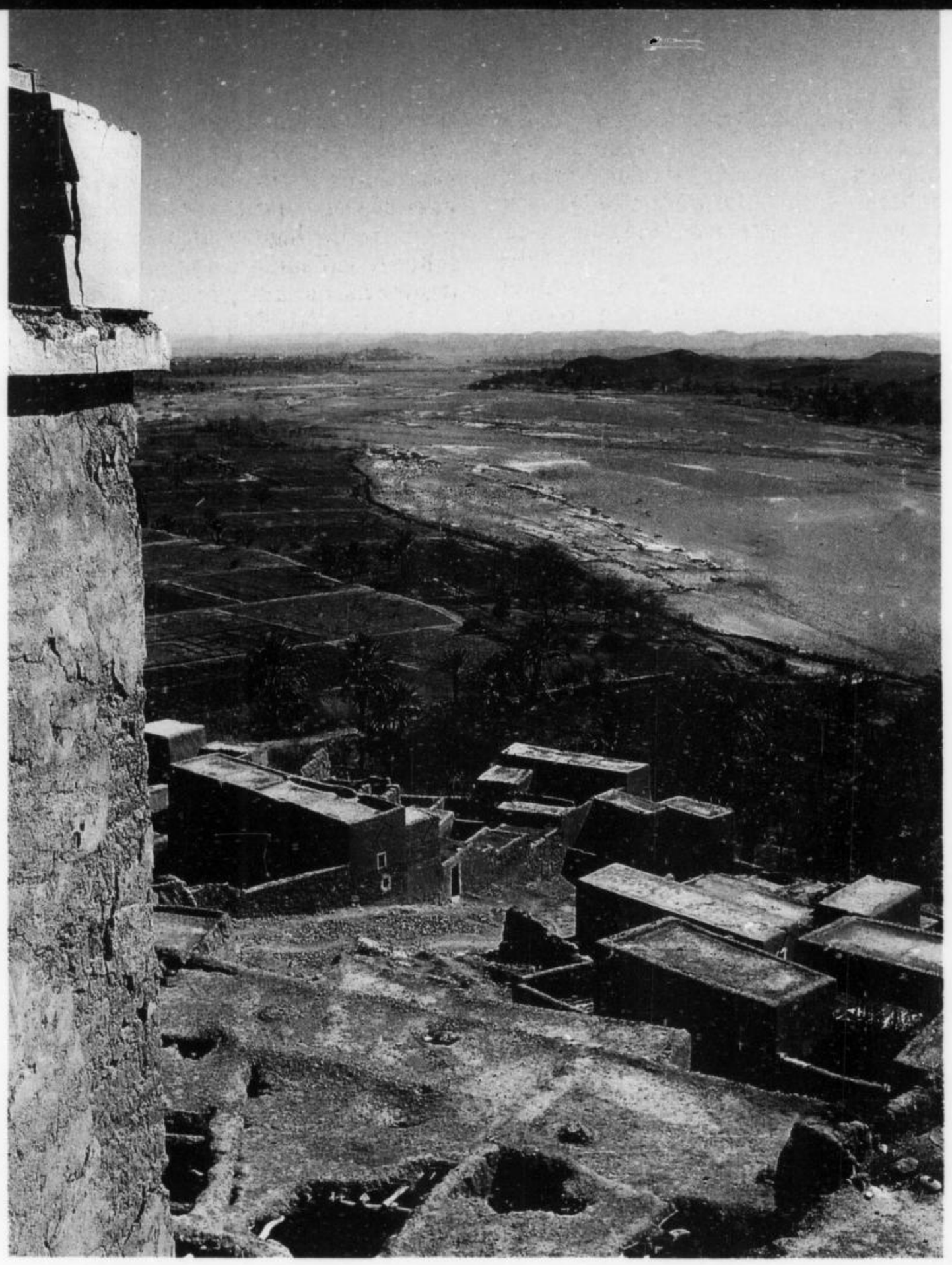
In 1992, during the CSCE follow-up meeting in Helsinki, a decision was taken to nominate a High Commissioner for National Minorities. The High Commissioner has no competence to ajudicate but only to provide "early warning" and, as appropriate, "early actions" at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have, in his opinion, the potential to develop into a conflict within the CSCE area, affecting peace, stability or relations between participating states.

On 18 December 1992, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Declaration formulates the obligation of states to protect the existence and identity of minorities within their respective territories. Among the rights of persons belonging to minorities, it lists: the right to enjoy their own culture; to profess and practise their own religion; to use their own language; to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as well as in the decision-making process concerning the minority to which they belong; to establish and monitor their own associations; to establish and maintain without any discrimination free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group or other citizens of other states to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

The importance of this Declaration can hardly be overestimated. It is the first comprehensive, universal standard-setting instrument dealing with the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and as such it will influence state practice and national legislation. ■



Opposite page and right: wall paintings in support of human rights adorn the outer walls of the old prison in Durban (South Africa). They were produced by members of the Natal Visual Arts Organization.



Ait Ben Haddou, a desert-born model for urban design

by Louis Werner

THE High Atlas mountain chain once divided Morocco into two distinct parts. The area of ample rainfall, bountiful agriculture and placid village life to the north was called *bled al-makhzan*, the land of imperial governance. To the south, a rocky, sandy and sun-baked expanse stretched into the Sahara. This was *bled al-siba*, the land of disorder.

This geographical dichotomy did not always hold, however, as the great fourteenth-century Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun noted. Often called the father of modern sociology, Ibn Khaldun saw fundamental differences in the organizing principles and cultural bases of city life and desert life, but he also found ample evidence of parallels, and indeed of a symbiotic relationship of such intensity that the unfolding of history itself depended on it. As he saw it, the seeds of urban culture's highest artistic and political achievements, reached only through co-operative enterprise, were buried somewhere deep in the soul of the lone desert horseman. Whenever nomads rode together in bands of even five or ten men, they incorporated a collective spirit and a joint purpose pushing inexorably towards a larger design.

The Moroccan desert is rich in examples writ small of what were to be the seeds of dynastic urban grandeur. The southern oases along the lush green river valleys are cultivated with the same intensity and ingenuity as the north's fertile plains. Clan loyalties once radiated from the southern strongholds of the local saint in much the same way that dynastic loyalties later spread from the imperial cities of Meknes, Fez and Rabat.

Perhaps nowhere are these parallels between desert and urban Moroccan culture more striking than in a comparison of Ait Ben Haddou, a hauntingly quiet fortified farming village south of the High Atlas, with the teeming, labyrinthine, cacophonous kasbah of old Fez. Both are on UNESCO's World Heritage List, and one can visit neither without recalling the lessons taught by Ibn Khaldun.

ROOFTOP NOMADS

While Fez has a recorded history, a host of founding dynasts known by name, and precise construction dates for its earliest architecture, we know little of Ait Ben Haddou's Berber past. Its age as a human settlement, we can safely assume, is less than the geological age of the rock upon which it is built, but its proximity to known prehistoric sites in the Sahara indicates quite plausibly that it is centuries, if not millennia, older than Fez.

But we do know that it, like Fez, represents the acme of its own particular school of high-density, multi-use, environmentally-adapted architecture and town planning. Ait Ben Haddou's desert-born model for urban design, applied with such stunning success to the Fez kasbah, dramatically illustrates Ibn Khaldun's unified theory of civilization.

For in Ait Ben Haddou city and desert living habits meet in unusual concord. Densely-packed, multi-storey dwellings create an utterly urban atmosphere, yet their inhabitants still live something of a nomadic existence. In response to changing temperatures, they "migrate" from room to room, from rooftops where they sleep at night to ground-level chambers where they escape the midday heat, just as pastoralists move about in response to climate-induced changes in grazing and watering conditions.

Ait Ben Haddou is by no means southern Morocco's only fortified village constructed of stone, rammed earth, adobe brick and mud plaster. The valleys of the Dra, Dades, Gheria and Ziz rivers and their tributaries are studded with such settlements in all shapes and sizes. One stretch of the Dades is in fact known in the tourist guides as the "Route of the

Kasbahs". But the term "kasbah" leads to a certain amount of confusion when applied to the High Atlas and to pre-Saharan oases. The word can lead the unwary to imagine mistakenly the maze-like alleyways and dead-ends of the imperial cities' enclosed palace precincts, now converted to mixed commercial and domestic use.

More precisely, however, desert kasbahs are the ex-residences of southern Morocco's once-great ruling families—the Glaoui, the Goundafa and the M'tougga—usually built to stand alone on some imposing mountain spur. The only true kasbah of this type that remains largely intact is the Glaoui family's home at Telouet.

CASTLES AND KASBAHS

To describe the full range of southern Moroccan architecture, one needs to be familiar with two Berber words, *agadir* and *tighremt*, which refer respectively to fortified granaries and the multi-towered castles occupied by village headmen, as well as with the Arabic words *kelaa* and *kasr*, which refer to mountain citadel villages and to walled oasis settlements.

The so-called "kasbah" of rural Morocco is often in fact a *tighremt*, constructed usually in the midst of the village. But since village housing is built contiguously and shares party walls, it becomes impossible over time to tell where the *tighremt* ends and the *kasr* begins. Separate construction thus takes on the look of an organic whole.

Ait Ben Haddou has at least four *tighremt*-like structures. Because the village is built for defensive purposes up the flank of a steep hill, the fairly rectilinear grid pattern of the typical *kasr* has here been abandoned in favour of a more fluid layout following the contour lines. As a result it exhibits even more than the usual amount of spatial disorientation.

The view looking down upon the multi-level flat roofs from the ruined hilltop *agadir* that overlooks Ait Ben Haddou takes in the overall plan of the village and the flow of its passageways. From this perspective the settlement calls to mind a geode, a geological formation with which the region is rife, but a convex rather than a concave geode, with the massed, crystal-like cubic forms of its architecture jutting up from the dull regularity of the surrounding landscape.

Village housing displays a perfect marriage of form, function, material and climate. In view of the latitude and the heat of the Sun, the ratio of habitable volume to exposed exterior surface is maximized by the networks of irregularly oriented walls shadowing courtyards and second-storey family quarters. Flat open roofs provide ample work space and an area where grain and dates can be spread out to dry. Fresh animal fodder is conserved in the cooler, damper ground-level store-rooms.

Sun-dried mud is an ideal building material in zones of low humidity where there are wide temperature fluctuations between day and night. Exterior walls heat slowly during the day, but radiate interior warmth during chilly nights. By morning, the high-ceilinged rooms have fully cooled and are comfortable again despite the mounting midday heat.

Ait Ben Haddou is constructed mainly of monolithic walls of rammed earth—mud, straw, dung and gravel tamped into rectangular wooden shuttering—and unbaked, handmade adobe bricks. The thick monolithic units are generally used for the lower levels and outer walls, the bricks for upper walls, stairways, partitions and the ever-present surface ornamentation.

Foundation walls for some of the *tighremt*'s twenty-metre towers are two metres thick, tapering to just one brick's width at the top. In a land where plumb lines were unknown until recently, right angles were considered not worth striving for. Instead, the sloping look gives the entire *kasr* a feeling of vertical tension and momentum. Against the backdrop of the High Atlas, this upward sweep makes the village appear to levitate from its hillside setting.

Above, towers of the fortified village of Ait Ben Haddou.
Opposite page, the Ounila valley seen from the village.

Because it lies in the Ounila river's flood plain, not far from its confluence with the Mellah, the village is bifurcated by running water. To the east is old Ait Ben Haddou, the village of mud brick and high walls; on the Ounila's western bank is the new town, built of cinder block and concrete slab—cubical too in its own modern way, but so much the poorer for it.

The new town looks as if it has been hastily erected to serve the needs of the busloads of tourists arriving on two-hour visits. As such, it serves a necessary purpose. One hesitates to think how the old village's increasingly delicate sociological and physical condition could withstand the tourist shock—not to mention that caused by the many Hollywood film crews which have worked here—if drink stands and postcard shops had not been set at a distance from the village proper.

Ait Ben Haddou's ancient half still rests on shaky ground. Many of its homes have been abandoned by families who prefer the new town's piped water and electricity. Only six families remain today.

FACING THE FUTURE

In order to attract the old village's occupants back from the other side, a new organization, the Centre for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Architectural Heritage in the Atlas and Sub-Atlas Zones (*Centre de Conservation et de Réhabilitation du Patrimoine Architectural des Zones Atlasiques et Subatlasiques*) has undertaken a project to rebuild Ait Ben Haddou's mosque and involve the community in long-range planning.

The village needs to offer a balanced, low-impact array of tourist services, but also to maintain its traditional agricultural base. The problem is whether, as the village leader puts it, the sheep stabled in his kasbah's lower enclosure are compatible with paying overnight guests upstairs. As for the already abandoned housing, how can mixed-use stables, granaries and domestic quarters be "retro-fitted" with the physical facilities—electricity, plumbing, larger rooms—expected by both foreign tourists and Moroccan home-owners accustomed to more modern accommodation? This is the question that the Centre's architects and sociologists are now trying to answer.

When the Centre asked the new town's residents what improvements would be most likely to draw them back to their original homes, the mosque's repair was near the top of their list. And since the project is now near completion, time will tell if it will in itself be sufficient to spark a revitalization. But since the mosque is without question the village's architectural and spiritual centrepiece, it is fitting that it should be restored first.

Over the past few centuries Ait Ben Haddou has survived flooding, siege and drought. In the future it faces perhaps even more daunting challenges—heavy tourist traffic, agricultural obsolescence and physical abandonment. But there is still hope. Its designation by UNESCO as a World Heritage site has brought it to the attention of the wider world. And its townspeople have taken a stand to protect it from reckless change. ■

LOUIS WERNER,
an American journalist and film-maker, is a contributing editor with *Américas*, the bi-monthly magazine of the Organization of American States (OAS).

ANTWERP 93

CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE

Above, the Zingaro troupe in action; right, the Central Station; below, the Bourla Theatre.

IN 1993 it is the turn of Antwerp—following Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, Berlin, Glasgow, Dublin and Madrid—to play the part of cultural capital of Europe. Belgium's second city, which is also Europe's second largest port, is planning a series of exhibitions and other events, not merely as a celebration but also as a reflection on the role and responsibility of art at the end of the second millennium.

Antwerp will be playing host on this occasion to nearly 2,000 artists from all over the world, representing a wide range of art forms, including music, drama, opera, visual arts, ballet, street theatre and the arts of the media. The ancient city has undergone a thorough rejuvenation treatment: its historic buildings have been restored, its old quarters spruced up, its squares remodelled and its streets pedestrianized, and a programme of architecture and urban renewal is preparing the way for the Antwerp of the twenty-first century.

Among the hundreds of cultural events on offer will be: an exhibition of the paintings of Jacob Jordaens, the great Baroque artist, the 400th anniversary of whose birth the town will be commemorating; a display of antique diamond jewellery (Antwerp being the world's greatest diamond centre); and an exhibition showing some of the 6,000 terra-cotta soldiers found in the tomb of the third-century-B.C. Chinese emperor Qin Shihuangdi. Visitors will also be able to attend performances at the Bourla Theatre or see the modern collections of the Middelheim open-air sculpture museum.

Activities will be in full swing this summer, when attractions will include the Eurosail tall ships parade and exhibitions on animals and the environment to mark the 150th anniversary of Antwerp Zoo. ■

RECENT RECORDS

LAOS
Traditional Music of the South
Musique Traditionnelle du Sud
MUSIQUES & MUSICIENS du MONDE
MUSICS & MUSICIANS of the WORLD

MUSIC FROM AROUND THE WORLD

LAOS. ***Traditional music of the South***
Musics and Musicians of the World series
CD Unesco/Audivis D 8042

A crossroads of civilizations, Laos still bears the imprint of a strong Khmer influence and this recording illustrates the force and wealth of its musical traditions. It presents ritual music played on cymbals and the *khène,* a mouth-organ which is a favourite Laotian instrument, courtship songs, music for the ceremony of the buffalo sacrifice played with splendid gongs and bells, music by an aristocratic *pinphat* orchestra, and a curious imitation of the sound of a train pulling out of a station. The unfamiliar sounds of these fine pieces whet the listener's interest in a country hitherto spared by tourism.

TRAVADINHA.
The violin of Cape Verde
Music from the World
CD Buda Records 92556-2

Although more Cape Verdeans live abroad, on the east coast of the United States in particular, than on the islands themselves, impoverished by colonization and excessive deforestation, the country's music and musicians are relatively unknown, except perhaps for the singer Cesaria Evora, who has won an international reputation. On this record the violinist Travadinha, who died in 1987, is accompanied by stringed and percussion instruments and a choir as he plays traditional Cape Verde melodies—plangent *mornas,* perhaps originating in 18th-century Portuguese *modinhas,* full of *saudade,* the nostalgia that is a constant feature of all Lusitano-Brazilian music; livelier *coladeiras,* recalling Afro-Cuban *guarachas;* a mazurka evoking the traditional music of the West Indies; and a samba which is a samba only in name. This is a musical universe waiting to be discovered.

JAZZ

DANILO PÉREZ
Pérez (piano), Santi Debriano (bass), Jack DeJohnette (drums), David Sánchez (tenor sax and soprano), Rúben Blades (vocal)
CD BMG Novus 01241 6318 2

A first disc from a remarkable young Panamanian pianist. Danilo Pérez, a member of a dynasty of Panamanian musicians, distinguished himself in Dizzy Gillespie's United Nations Orchestra. He combines brilliant technique with a complete mastery of Afro-Latin rhythms. On this CD he gives a new, brisker rendering of his own composition, "Friday Morning", which he recorded three years ago with Paquito D'Rivera, and performs the Panamanian lyrical bolero "Irremediablemente Solo". It's a surprise to find Rúben Blades singing on two tracks—not salsa for once but dreamy songs with sophisticated harmonies including a "Skylark", sung in English, that Fauré would not have disowned.

JOHN HICKS
Friends old and new
Hicks (piano), Ron Carter (bass), Grady Tate (drums), Greg Gisbert (trumpet), Al Grey (trombone), Joshua Redman (tenor sax)
CD BMG Novus 01241631412

John Hicks, who deserves to be better known, is one of the warmest pianists in jazz and like all true artists he has his own hallmark sound, crystalline in the high notes, which identifies him immediately. Hicks produces music which is by turns effervescent ("Making whoopee", "It don't mean a thing") and romantic ("I want to talk about you"), but always swings. Here he plays with the young jazzman Joshua Redman, son of the saxophonist-composer Dewey Redman, one-time associate of Ornette Coleman, and more established musicians such as Clark Terry, as mellow as ever, Ron Carter and Grady Tate, who provide exemplary accompaniment.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

FRANZ SCHUBERT
Winterreise
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Murray Perahia.
CD Sony Classical SK 48 237

Two outstanding performers who understand each other perfectly join their talents in this

cycle of "awe-inspiring songs" ("schauerlicher Lieder") composed during an unhappy period of Schubert's life to poems by Wilhelm Müller. Fischer-Dieskau, at once elegant, controlled and majestic, and a limpid and musical Perahia, whose interpretations gain in simplicity as his career progresses, perfectly express the melancholy atmosphere of this austere music, as sombre as a winter afternoon.

MIDORI
Encore!
Kreisler, Paganini, Fauré, Tchaikovsky, Sarasate. . .
Midori (violin), Robert McDonald (piano)
CD Sony Classical SK 52568

Midori, a charming and sensitive Japanese violinist who has played as a soloist with the world's greatest orchestras—Berlin, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, London—here offers a selection of pieces, mostly from the post-romantic period, by Paganini, Fauré, Tchaikovsky and Scriabin, but also by less well-known composers such as Sarasate (the lovely "Habanera"), Cui, Bacewicz and Szymanowski. Midori's technique is dazzling, her sonority voluptuous, her touch flowing. She is magnificently accompanied by Robert McDonald, who is responsive to all her nuances and changes of tempo.

ISABELLE LEYMARIE ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

YES TO DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

I read Federico Mayor's *Commentary* in your November 1992 issue with great interest. To quote the opening: "A viable democracy is inconceivable in the absence of an authentic democratic culture. This culture of democracy seems to me to be a space that permits the synthesis of four fundamental concepts: citizenship, tolerance, education, and the free exchange of ideas and peoples." The rest of the article is in the same spirit. This is encouraging. Without such ideas, the world, and Africa in particular, will have great difficulty in coping with the challenge of the year 2000.

MME. A. DIOP
PUBLISHER, PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE
PARIS (FRANCE)

HOW DEMOCRATIC ARE WE?

Your November 1992 issue entitled "The Challenge of Democracy" charts pertinently enough the vicissitudes of the definition of democracy. However, I was sorry to see that nothing was said about one important challenge harboured within our own so-called modern democracies. Should you not have extended your investigations to explore the inadequacies of Western democracies? What is the value of democracy when political power is in thrall to the power of money or when only 40 per cent of the population vote in a presidential election? What liberty and what democracy exists for the poor and the unemployed? Meanwhile, great advocates of democracy that we are, we are asphyxiating Africa and various developing countries elsewhere. These few examples are enough to indicate what is wrong with equating Western society with democracy.

BERTRAND FERRO
LAXAU (FRANCE)

NO NEED FOR PANIC

I was very interested by the ideas expressed by the astrophysicist Herbert Reeves in the interview published in your January 1993 issue. But I strongly disagree with him about the danger posed by carbon dioxide to our climate. Volcanoes were emitting carbon dioxide long before we had oil, but nobody has ever claimed that variations in the level of volcanic activity could explain the ice ages, or the global warming experienced when the Roman Empire was at its peak, or the many occasions when wine was sold by weight in Paris because it was frozen. What is more, in twenty years' time we shall no longer be burning oil because everything will be powered by nuclear-generated electricity. I share Hubert Reeves' concern for the future of humanity. But there is no need to panic.

RÉGIS TARDY
AURIOL (FRANCE)

MYTHS OF THE FLOOD

I write to strongly protest the clearly subjective implications of the wording of the introductory remarks to "The Great Flood" in your June 1992 issue. You twice refer to the event in question as a "myth", implying that it is a fictitious, fanciful matter—one imaginary and unreal, to quote the Oxford Dictionary. However, there is certainly sufficient archaeological and palaeontological evidence to call into question even the most incredulous of agnostic views. Marine fossils at the top of Mt. Everest surely provide proof of an historical phenomenon that cannot simply be explained by "continental drift".

M. T. BALKE,
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME,
GABORONE (BOTSWANA)

The concept of myth is a complex one. Sacred narratives found in diverse forms in every society, myths belong primarily to the world of the imagination. If they preserve the memory of historical events, they transpose these events into a perspective that transcends them. These questions have been extensively discussed in modern studies of mythology by such scholars as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Georges Dumézil and Mircea Eliade. Editor

DECADENCE

Although not without interest, the themes treated by the new-look *Courier* reflect a civilization that must be described as decadent, since it is composed of people cut off from their ontological roots. Our society is a prison in which individuals are chained to one another and can only break their chains at the expense of their companions in squalor. The *Courier*, as I see it, only serves to illustrate the facilities of this prison. So less, please, about television, cars and sport and more about traditions—our only links, however tenuous, with our divine origin.

MME. C. NIAT COUZON
ST-MARTIN-DU-VAR (FRANCE)

SOME CORRECTIONS

I was very interested—as I am sure all students of Africa must have been—by Caroline Haardt's excellent piece on the island of Gorée in the October 1992 issue. But I should like to correct two small details. The phrase "Slave Coast" is correctly applied only to the Bight of Benin and cannot be extended to far-distant Angola, even though the slave trade was practised there. Secondly, the capital of French West Africa in the late nineteenth century was Saint-Louis, not Dakar as the article states. Dakar was only made the federal capital in 1902, and became the capital of Senegal in 1957.

RENÉ G. BASSIER
PARIS (FRANCE)

The UNESCO COURIER

46th YEAR
Published monthly in 32 languages and in Braille by UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
31, rue François Bonvin, 75015 Paris, France.

Director: Bahgat Elnadi
Editor-in-chief: Adel Rifaat

EDITORIAL STAFF (Paris)
Managing Editor: Gillian Whitcomb
English edition: Roy Malkin
French edition: Alain Lévêque, Neda El Khazen
Spanish edition: Miguel Labarca, Araceli Ortiz de Urbina
Art Unit/Production: Georges Servat
Illustrations: Ariane Bailey (Tel. 45.68.46.90)
Documentation: Violette Ringelstein (Tel. 45.68.46.85)
Liaison with non-Headquarters editions and press: Solange Belin (Tel. 45.68.46.87)
Secretariat: Annie Brachet (Tel. 45.68.47.15),
Administrative Assistant: Prithi Perera
Selection in Braille in English, French, Spanish and Korean: Mouna Chatta (45.68.47.14)

NON-HEADQUARTERS EDITIONS
Russian: Alexander Melnikov (Moscow)
German: Werner Merkli (Berne)
Arabic: El-Said Mahmoud El-Sheniti (Cairo)
Italian: Mario Guidotti (Rome)
Hindi: Ganga Prasad Vimal (Delhi)
Tamil: M. Mohammed Mustafa (Madras)
Persian: H. Sadough Vanini (Teheran)
Dutch: Claude Montrieux (Antwerp)
Portuguese: Benedicto Silva (Rio de Janeiro)
Turkish: Mefra Ilgazer (Istanbul)
Urdu: Wali Mohammad Zaki (Islamabad)
Catalan: Joan Carreras i Marti (Barcelona)
Malaysian: Azizah Hamzah (Kuala Lumpur)
Korean: Yi Tong-ok (Seoul)
Swahili: Leonard J. Shuma (Dar-es-Salaam)
Slovene: Aleksandra Kornhauser (Ljubljana)
Chinese: Shen Guofen (Beijing)
Bulgarian: Dragomir Petrov (Sofia)
Greek: Sophie Costopoulos (Athens)
Sinhala: Neville Piyadigama (Colombo)
Finnish: Marjatta Oksanen (Helsinki)
Basque: Juxto Egaña (Donastia)
Thai: Pornnipha Limpaphayom (Bangkok)
Vietnamese: Do Phuong (Hanoi)
Pashto: Ghoti Khaweri (Kabul)
Hausa: Habib Alhassan (Sokoto)
Bangla: Abdullah A.M. Sharafuddin (Dhaka)
Ukrainian: Victor Stelmakh (Kiev)
Galician: Xabier Senin Fernández (Santiago de Compostela)

SALES AND PROMOTION
Subscriptions: Marie-Thérèse Hardy (Tel. 45.68.45.65), Jocelyne Despouy, Jacqueline Louise-Julie, Manichan Ngonekeo, Michel Ravassard, Mohamed Salah El Din
Customer service: Ginette Motreff (Tel. 45.68.45.64)
Accounts: (Tel. 45.68.45.65)
Shipping: (Tel. 45.68.47.50)

SUBSCRIPTIONS. Tel.: 45.68.45.65
1 year: 211 French francs. 2 years: 396 FF.
Binder for one year's issues: 72 FF
Developing countries:
1 year: 132 French francs. 2 years: 211 FF.
Payment can be made with any convertible currency to the order of UNESCO

Individual articles and photographs not copyrighted may be reprinted providing the credit line reads "Reprinted from the *UNESCO Courier*", plus date of issue, and three voucher copies are sent to the editor. Signed articles reprinted must bear author's name. Non-copyright photos will be supplied on request. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by an international reply coupon covering postage. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of UNESCO or those of the editors of the *UNESCO Courier*. Photo captions and headlines are written by the *UNESCO Courier* staff. The boundaries on maps published in the magazine do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNESCO or the United Nations. The *UNESCO Courier* is produced in microform (microfilm and/or microfiche) by: (1) UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris; (2) University Microfilms (Xerox), Ann Arbor, Michigan 48100 U.S.A.; (3) N.C.R. Microcard Edition, Indian Head Inc., 111 West 40th Street, New York, U.S.A.; (4) Bell and Howell Co., Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691, U.S.A.

IMPRIMÉ EN FRANCE (Printed in France)
DÉPOT LÉGAL: C1 - JUIN 1993
COMMISSION PARITAIRE N° 71842 - DIFFUSÉ PAR LES N.M.P.P.
Photocomposition: Le Courrier de l'UNESCO.
Photogravure: ETIC GRAPHIC, Impression: IMAYE GRAPHIC, Z.I. des Touches, Bd Henri-Becquerel, 53021 Laval Cedex (France)
ISSN 0304-3118 N° 6-1993-OPI-93-516A

This issue comprises 52 pages and a 4-page insert between pages 10-11 and 42-43.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
FOR REPRODUCTION

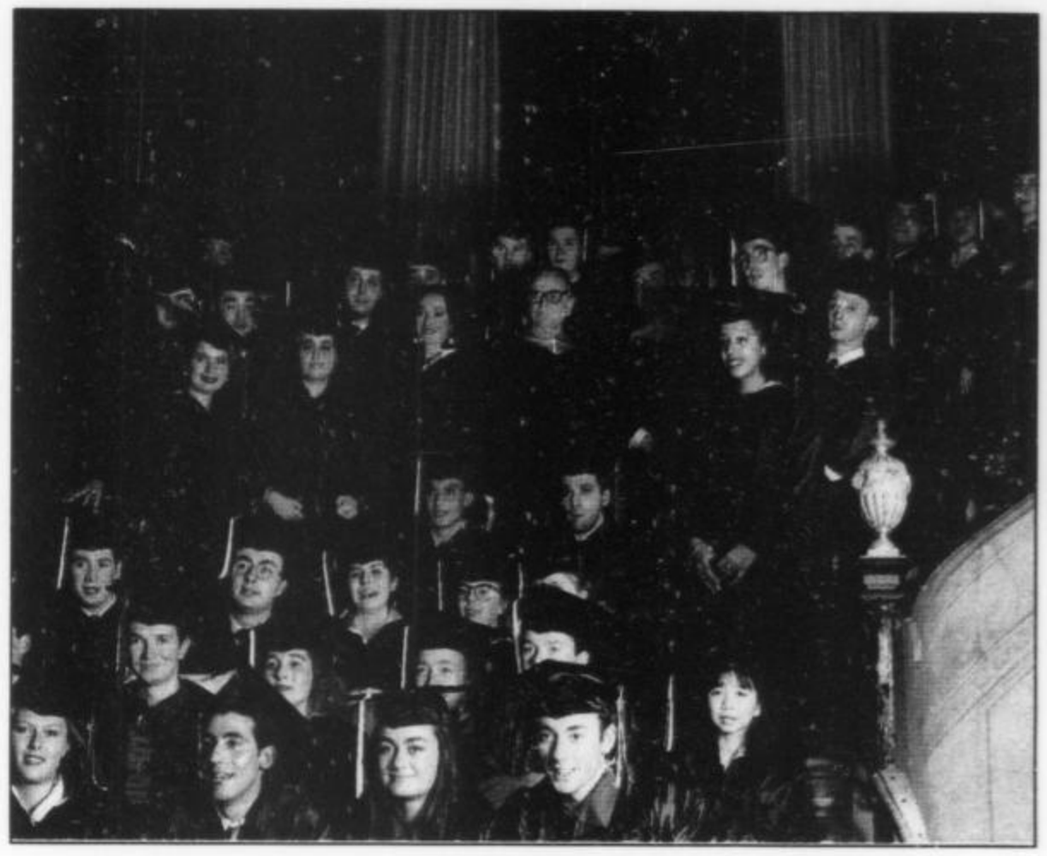
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE MAXIM'S DE PARIS

MAXIM'S

DIMH
INTERNATIONAL HOTEL
MANAGEMENT DIPLOMA

MAHI
MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL
HOTEL MANAGEMENT

For an international management career in hotel
and tourism industry.
Bilingual program and international staff
Theorical and practical training
Full time / part time
Admission : undergraduate
Classes begin : september 93



INFORMATION / ADMISSION

TEL. : (1) 43 38 61 62 - FAX : (1) 43 38 06 33

INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL MAXIM'S DE PARIS - 37/39 RUE SAINT SEBASTIEN 75011 PARIS FRANCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover, page 3: Claude Perrin © Cargaleiro/SPADEM 1993. Guéthary Museum. **Page 5:** Facelly © Sipa Press, Paris. **Page 7:** Michel Ginies © Sipa Press, Paris. **Page 9:** UNESCO-Michel Claude. **Page 10:** Burri © Magnum, Paris. **Page 11:** © Rosa Berardo, Paris. **Page 12 (above):** UNESCO-Hubbard. **Pages 12-13:** Viollet Collection, Paris. **Page 13 (above):** Martine Franck © Magnum, Paris. **Page 14:** © Musée de l'Homme, Paris. **Page 15:** © Succession H. Matisse, Paris. Musée Matisse, Nice. **Pages 16-17:** Kay Lawson © Rapho, Paris. **Page 18:** Diego Gradis © Traditions pour demain, Paris. **Pages 19, 36-37:** Eric Bouvet © Saga, Paris. **Page 20:** M. Philippot © Sygma, Paris. **Page 21:** D. McCullin © Magnum, Paris. **Page 22:** Gilles Peress © Magnum, Paris. **Page 23:** Neil Cooper © Panos Pictures, London. **Page 24 (above):** Ron Gilling © Panos Pictures, London. **Page 24 (below):** Jeremy Hartley © Panos Pictures, London. **Page 25:** Marc McEvoy © Panos Pictures, London. **Page 26:** Nigel Dickinson © Still Pictures, London. **Page 27 (above):** © S. Krasemann © Jacana, Paris. **Page 27 (below):** Moisnard © Explorer, Paris. **Page 28:** © François Guenet, Paris. **Page 29:** © Charles Lenars, Paris. **Page 30 (below):** Griffiths © Magnum, Paris. **Pages 30-31:** Salgado © Magnum, Paris. **Page 32:** Le Segretain © Sygma, Paris. **Page 33:** © Riccardo Polastro, Rome. **Page 34:** B. Bisson © Sygma, Paris. **Page 35:** © Jean-Loup Charmet, Musée Carnavalet, Paris. **Page 36:** Guichard © Sygma, Paris. **Page 38:** P. Perrin © Saga, Paris. **Page 39:** © Clare Avery, London. **Page 41:** Girard-Hatzfeld © Gamma, Paris. **Pages 42-43:** Noel Quidu © Gamma, Paris. **Pages 44, 45:** © V. K. Nydoo, Durban. **Page 46:** Mark © Rapho, Paris. **Page 47:** Le Diascorn © Rapho, Paris. **Page 48 (above left):** © B. Enguerand, Antwerp. **Page 48 (above right):** © A. Van Raemdonck, Antwerp. **Page 48 (below right):** © M. Seresia, Antwerp.

LISEZ TOUS LES MOIS

ÉTVDES

Revue d'information, de réflexion et de culture

*Dans les **prochains numéros :***

La Russie libre et l'Europe	Vladimir ZELINSKY
Education japonaise, éducation française	Isabelle HASEGAWA
Pour une meilleure information	Claude-Jean BERTRAND
Le temps	Etienne KLEIN
Kafka religieux	Guido SOMMAVILLA
L'Eglise de Haïti et son histoire	Gilles DANROC

Choix de films, Chroniques de théâtre, Revue des livres, Choix de disques

Le n° : (144 pages) 50 F, étr. 57 F
Abonnement : 11 n^{os} / an : 430 F - étr. 520 F

Rédacteur en chef
Jean-Yves CALVEZ

Pour recevoir un numéro ou vous abonner, envoyez vos nom, adresse et règlement à l'ordre d'ETUDES à : Assas Editions 14, rue d'Assas - 75006 PARIS - Tél. : (1) 44 39 48 48 Ou, sur Minitel, tapez 36 15 SJ*ETUDES

EACH MONTH, ESSENTIAL READING FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

EACH MONTH: A TOPIC OF UNIVERSAL INTEREST SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF LEADING SPECIALISTS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND VARYING POINTS OF VIEW...

REDISCOVERING 1492 ... IN PRAISE OF TOLERANCE ... UNIVERSALITY: A EUROPEAN VISION? ... THE KNOWLEDGE BEARERS ... TELE...VISIONS ... THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY ... THE COMPETITIVE WORLD OF SPORT ... EXPLORING THE COSMOS ... VIOLENCE ... PSYCHOANALYSIS: THE HIDDEN I ... A TIME TO LOVE ... WATER OF LIFE ... MINORITIES...

EACH MONTH: AN INTERVIEW WITH A PERSONALITY FROM THE WORLD OF ART, LITERATURE, SCIENCE, CULTURE...

FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND ... JORGE AMADO ... RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH ... JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIERE ... JEAN LACOUTURE ... FEDERICO MAYOR ... NAGUIB MAHFOUZ ... SEMBENE OUSMANE ... ANDREI VOZNESENSKY ... FREDERIC ROSSIF ... HINNERK BRUHNS ... CAMILO JOSE CELA ... VACLAV HAVEL ... SERGEI S. AVERINTSEV ... ERNESTO SABATO ... GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND ... CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS ... LEOPOLDO ZEA ... PAULO FREIRE ... DANIEL J. BOORSTIN ... FRANÇOIS JACOB ... MANU DIBANGO ... FAROUK HOSNY ... SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN ... JORGE LAVELLI ... LEON SCHWARTZENBERG ... TAHAR BEN JELLOUN ... GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ ... JACQUES-YVES COUSTEAU ... MELINA MERCOURI ... CARLOS FUENTES ... JOSEPH KI-ZERBO ... VANDANA SHIVA ... WILLIAM STYRON ... OSCAR NIEMEYER ... MIKIS THEODORAKIS ... ATAHUALPA YUPANQUI ... HERVE BOURGES ... ABDEL RAHMAN EL BACHA ... SUSANA RINALDI ... HUBERT REEVES ... JOSE CARRERAS ... A LETTER FROM FREUD TO EINSTEIN ... LUC FERRY ... CHARLES MALAMOUD ... UMBERTO ECO ...

EACH MONTH: REGULAR FEATURES ON THE ENVIRONMENT, THE WORLD HERITAGE, UNESCO ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE...

THEME OF OUR JULY-AUGUST 1993 DOUBLE ISSUE:

MODERNITY

Also featuring an interview with the American film-maker

OLIVER STONE

director of

Platoon

Born on the Fourth of July

J.F.K.

...